

IMAGINING THE WORDS OF OTHERS: PUBLIC MEMORY AND CEREMONIAL  
REPETITION IN AMERICAN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

A Dissertation

by

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## ABSTRACT

Rhetorical analyses of collective memory study how perceptions of a shared past are maintained through public texts. This analysis explores an alternative relationship between rhetoric and remembrance. Rather than study the textual form of public memory alone, I argue that communities actively interpret artifacts of public discourse as public memory. The most enduring form of this practice is ceremonial repetition, or the deliberate recitation of a text during moments of communal observance. When performed effectively, ceremonial repetition imagines a text by highlighting a resonant virtue through public reading. Such strategies to mold the meaning of a text occur through a variety of messages adjoining recitation, such as formal speech, visual display, written testament, or spatial and bodily enactment. Ceremonial repetition illustrates the extensional evolution and legacy of speech in the public imagination.

In a range of historically grounded case studies, this work explores the effectiveness and dominant strategies of ceremonial repetition different eras of American public discourse. These examples include the rhetorical invocation of a text within the discursive space of repetition, illustrated in Frederick Douglass's August First orations on the Emancipation Proclamation in the late nineteenth-century; the pairing of visual icons and ceremonial repetition, as exemplified in official and public readings of George Washington's Farewell Address within the context of a political flag display during the Civil War; the disjunction of repetition and written reflection, as evidenced by the U.S. Senate's institutional recitation of the Farewell Address on Washington's birthday; and

the emerging genre of repetition performed through multiple voices and resonant scenery, as clarified in a variety of modern performances, such as the reading of the “I Have a Dream” speech by elementary school students celebrating the King holiday. These case studies illuminate various strategies used to translate past words by constraining their meaning for the needs of the present. Though ceremonial repetition offers audiences the opportunity to reconstitute a text’s properties and public legacy, this study concludes that such epideictic practice is most effective during moments of perceived crisis wherein core tenets of a political culture are profoundly questioned or disrupted.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to patient teachers.

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Any mistakes or cockamamie claims in this work are solely my own.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION .....	1
Rhetoric and Repetition.....	1
Learning Virtue: Education, Repetition, and Invention .....	8
Repetition and Presence .....	14
Imagining the Words of Others .....	18
Conclusion.....	23
CHAPTER II LIVING TEXTS.....	30
Speech as Public Memory .....	30
Reconstituting a Text: Inherited and Extended Meaning .....	32
Memory and Sight: The Epideictic Genre.....	44
Textual Communities and the Thickness of Memory .....	57
Conclusion.....	65
CHAPTER III FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AUGUST FIRST, AND THE MEMORY OF THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION .....	67
Introduction .....	67
Proclaiming and Explaining Emancipation .....	71
Emancipation, Commemoration, and August First .....	76
Frederick Douglass and the Potential of Texts.....	81
Reimagining the Emancipation Proclamation .....	87
Medina, New York—1869 .....	93
Elmira, New York—1880 .....	97
Rochester, New York—1885 .....	102
Conclusion .....	108

CHAPTER IV REPETITION, “REBEL FLAGS,” AND THE UNION IMAGE OF WASHINGTON’S FAREWELL ADDRESS.....	112
Introduction: Images, Life, and Death .....	112
The Presence of Washington: 22 February 1862 .....	119
Speaking, Seeing, and Remembering.....	126
The Farewell Address as Enduring Testament.....	129
Remembering the Text .....	137
A Vision of Commemoration.....	144
Visualizing the Farewell Address .....	149
Conclusion.....	157
CHAPTER V MEMORY AS DISPLAY, RECOLLECTION AS PALIMPSEST: REPETITION OF THE FAREWELL ADDRESS IN THE U.S. SENATE .....	159
Introduction: Repetition in Isolation .....	159
Deliberative Epideictic: Personifying Washington’s Ghost.....	164
Memory and Recollection: A Theoretical Distinction .....	177
Memory: Locating a Perpetual Display of the Text .....	186
Recollection: The Institutional Palimpsest.....	192
The Euphoria of Reading .....	199
Change From Washington: Relevance of the Farewell .....	200
Continuity With Washington: Relevance of the Farewell.....	203
The Farewell Address as Individual Experience.....	206
Implications: Thickening the Text as Memory .....	209
CHAPTER VI NETWORKING THE TEXT: A NEW FACE OF CEREMONIAL REPETITION.....	215
Introduction: No Casino Gettysburg .....	215
Enthymemes Living in Media Environments.....	227
Flirting With Simulacrum: The Declaration of Independence, 2002-2011 .....	235
Community Without History: The Constitution in the U.S. House, 2011.....	247
Enacting Proof and Suspending Time: “I Have a Dream,” 2005-Present.....	259
Conclusion .....	272

CHAPTER VII CONCLUSION .....	276
Encountering the Second Life of Public Address .....	276
Examining Different Forms of the Text.....	277
Repetition as Translation: The Virtue of the Text.....	289
Conclusion.....	299
WORKS CITED.....	301



## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
1 “The Centennial Fourth—Mr. Richard Henry Lee Reading the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia” .....	117
2 “Richard Henry Lee reading the original document of the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July 1876 at Philadelphia” .....	117
3 “Captured Flags in the O” .....	125
4 “Rebel Flags in the Old House of Representatives in Washington” .....	125
5 The Senate’s Institutional Palimpsest .....	198
6 No Casino Gettysburg Film Stills, Part One .....	220
7 No Casino Gettysburg Film Stills, Part Two.....	222

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*To the thinking soul images serve as if they were contents of perception (and when it asserts or denies them to be good or bad it avoids or pursues them). That is why the soul never thinks without an image.*  
—Aristotle.<sup>1</sup>

*Neither is the imagination simply and only a messenger; but is invested with, or at leastwise usurpeth no small authority in itself, besides the duty of the message.*  
—Francis Bacon.<sup>2</sup>

### RHETORIC AND REPETITION

We need repetition. The life cycle demands a retreading of what came before: a new heartbeat, a new breath, a new sunrise, and a new rotation of the planet. These things fold into a pattern that is fleeting, previously established, and vital to our enduring existence. Repetition nurtures more than base survival. As R. G. Collingwood suggested, the basis of knowledge—“all history”—is “the re-enactment of past thought in the historian’s own mind,” producing a fresh encounter with the past “in the context of [our] own knowledge” and circumstances.<sup>3</sup> Though the life metaphor is a provocative framework for repetition, artifacts of popular culture offer a grimmer side to a phenomenon’s return. Sisyphus pushes his boulder in perpetuity. By the time the characters in Jean-Paul Sartre’s play “No Exit” realize they are dead, the full weight of their sentence—recollecting past misdeeds—is made more profound by the proviso that they must endure this process in the company of others: “Hell is—other people!”<sup>4</sup> The tension between repetition as life and repetition as a purgatory condition resides in the

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *On the Soul*, in *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 1992), 236-237.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 124.

<sup>3</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York and Oxford: Galaxy Book, 1956), 215.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays* (New York: Vintage International, 1989), 45.

perceived dichotomy between the authentic experience and the less fulfilling—or, in Sartre’s example, torturous—nature of a phenomenon’s return. Though central to the persistence of life, fear of recycling the inauthentic explains the primary concern intrinsic to repetition.

The promise of life and fear of purgatory that define repetition in the realms of biology and mythology are equally well represented in the history of rhetoric. Since its introduction to the lexicon of intellectual investigation, rhetoric has been defined, and in some ways burdened, by the question of imitation.<sup>5</sup> *Mimesis*, the Greek word for imitation, and its Latin counterpart, *imitatio*, are central to the development of rhetorical theory. Theorists have grappled with the functionality of repetition and pedagogy, rhetorical invention, and perceptions of reality and its replica from the broad canvas of *mimesis*. As Thomas Farrell has noted, the “double standard for appreciating and engaging the mimetic status of rhetorical discourse” in classical texts like Aristotle’s *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* foster an ongoing entanglement with imitation that is both essential and suspicious.<sup>6</sup>

Much of the puzzle with imitation derives from its multiple forms and public expressions. Robert Hariman defines the scope of imitation between linguistic ties that form “the relationship between text and context” and aid in “the construction of the canon,” to the vacuous messages that appeal to a “market-driven, consumption oriented”

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<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, as printed in Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings From Classical Times to the Present, 2nd Edition* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), 87-168.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 131.

sensibility.<sup>7</sup> Imitation can nurture a constructive inheritance of symbols and iconic works, or perpetuate a superficial loop of messages akin to communication purgatory. Whether traditional or transient, imitation seeps into our rhetorical practices, and is intrinsically bound up in how we construct and comprehend public messages. Confusion arises, however, as to how—in the age of reverberating slogans and Internet memes—scholars can heed the advice of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and “call attention to imitation” in contemporary rhetorical criticism, especially when prospective material for analysis is vast.<sup>8</sup> Such a task offers potential insight to the evolving relationship between rhetoric and repetition, and the complex spectrum between the lively bloom and suffering retreat that define each.

This study offers additional perspective on the relationship between rhetoric and repetition by investigating the richly enduring practice of ceremonial repetition in American public address. Ceremonial repetition refers to practices of reciting rhetorical discourse during moments of communal remembrance and observance. As I argue in later chapters, the act of oralizing speech out of its original time and context is the first step of the process, but not the only matter of significance in understanding the impact of the practice. Through ceremonial repetition communities enact the opportunity to reimagine discourse as public memory, and, through a variety of communicative strategies, foster and alter a sense of communal identity. Unlike the familiar and

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Hariman, “Afterword: Relocating the Art of Public Address,” in *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed, Thomas W. Benson (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 174.

<sup>8</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “Rhetorical Criticism 2009: A Study in Method,” in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, eds, Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 97.

important mode of criticism that analyzes the inventive savvy of agents crafting what Lloyd Bitzer called a “fitting response” to a rhetorical situation,<sup>9</sup> this study acknowledges the constitutive dimension of public discourse beyond the intended meaning encased by a rhetor. In other words, the central meaning of a text emerges from the inventive and stylistic choices of its author as well as its extended existence in public invocations and innovations that follow.

Rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke proposed two definitions essential to beginning an investigation of ceremonial repetition. First, Burke defined rhetoric as being “*rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.*”<sup>10</sup> The process of meaning making inherent to rhetoric is evident in renewed efforts to experience a speech text through repetition. As I elaborate in chapter two, every moment of repetition is a new opportunity to refashion, reimagine, and reconstitute the meaning of public discourse as it relates to a moment of ceremonial reflection. Such a response, in turn, also incorporates acts of conveyance that give shape and texture of ceremonial repetition. The fifth canon of rhetoric—delivery—is often overlooked in favor of criticism regarding the invention of arguments, despite Cicero’s well-known claim that delivery was the crucial component separating an “average speaker” and the “best

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<sup>9</sup> Lloyd Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 3.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 43.

orators.”<sup>11</sup> The second term central to an investigation of ceremonial repetition is Burke’s conception of form. Form, Burke suggested, is “the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite.”<sup>12</sup> Repetition is normally representative of a sense of constancy. By analyzing the influence of messages contributing to the form of a text repeated, we can begin to witness how ways of repeating are also ways of remembering and, as such, ways of altering and amending the meaning of texts.<sup>13</sup> Instead of analyzing the design of speech acts within contingent circumstances, ceremonial repetition asks critics to consider how the form of such acts—often conveyed in adjoining messages and communicative signals—function to shape and influence public perceptions of the text repeated.

Despite the volume and variety of publics engaging in practices of ceremonial repetition, and rhetorical scholars’ valuable position to analyze such phenomena, critics have rarely translated such practices into critical analysis. One key exception is Bradford Vivian’s study of the one-year commemoration of 9/11 in 2002. The occasion featured the recitation of revered public texts in lieu of original speeches, and gave way to what Vivian described as “neoliberal epideictic,” or a hollow, “apolitical vocabulary of democratic excellence” that, though intended for collective reflection, nevertheless “define[d] citizen’s involvement” in public affairs as “irrelevant” to enriching and

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<sup>11</sup> Cicero [trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse], *On the Ideal Orator (De Oratore)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 290.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Counterstatement* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 31.

<sup>13</sup> Burke’s oft-quoted observation on the relationship between rhetoric and identification is crucial here: “You persuade a man only insofar as you talk his language *by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea*, identifying your ways with his.” In many respects, the latter half of Burke’s sentence reads as a summary of the multiple ways a text might be reimagined in connection with ceremonial repetition. See: Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 55, *emphasis mine*.

sustaining “civic memory, tradition, and virtue.”<sup>14</sup> This study expands Vivian’s initial exploration of repetition as remembrance by probing deeper into a variety of historical contexts and audience strategies of commemoration. By doing so, I hope to better account for the positive and negative implications and possibilities such commemorative practice contributes the texts and communities in question.

Though vast and varied in form, ceremonial repetition most often includes veneration of an iconic rhetorical text that carries an enduring relevance between the words of dead authors and the attitudes of living publics. In their analysis of iconic imagery in the American experience, Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites argue that the proliferation of certain photos are essential to the ongoing process of cultural definition: Such images “highlight some roles and relationships and therefore make others less vital or intelligible or legitimate.”<sup>15</sup> In similar fashion, François Furstenberg defines keystone episodes of public discourse as “civic texts,” or messages that were used to teach Americans to “subscribe to the values of their fathers.”<sup>16</sup> Civic texts are not always clearly understood or universally agreed upon, Furstenberg elaborates. In “the very act of trying to interpret these documents,” he writes, “...ultimately served to exalt them even further. Through their continual appropriation by the popularizing civic texts, and through their institutionalization in school curricula and other sites of civic

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<sup>14</sup> Bradford Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic: Rhetorical Form and Commemorative Politics on September 11th, 2002,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (February 2006): 4.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 12.

<sup>16</sup> François Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington’s Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 22. In Furstenberg’s analysis three artifacts represent “civic texts”: The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution, and George Washington’s Farewell Address. It should be noted, however, that his analysis is largely limited to the early and mid-nineteenth century.

education, these canonical texts embodied and promoted American nationalism.”<sup>17</sup> In image and word, some ideas persist in the public imagination.

Ceremonial repetition is a cultural practice as old as the republic itself, often organized around public expressions instrumental to the tenets of American public philosophy. No amount of case studies could present a comprehensive picture of this rhetorical phenomenon. However, in the chapters that follow I have selected moments of ceremonial repetition that represent both a variety of historical eras as well as a multitude of forms through which iconic texts have been interpreted, imagined, and, in some cases, institutionalized. These case studies offer additional insight to the rhetorical dynamics involved in both reimagining the meaning of words and affirming or reconstituting the identity of communities. Among the texts included in this study, I examine post-Civil War recitals of the Emancipation Proclamation—“the sacred document” used to celebrate African American suffrage<sup>18</sup>; the repetition of George Washington’s Farewell Address (both as an isolated moment of remembrance in 1862, and a continuing tradition in the U.S. Senate); and twenty-first century treatments of some of America’s most sacred and enduring public texts, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” oration. Taken together, these case studies will illustrate both the various forms by which communities remember the meaning of texts, and the extent to which repetition contributes to the life of texts and the life of publics alike.

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<sup>17</sup> Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father*, 233-234.

<sup>18</sup> Ellen M. Litwicki, *American Public Holidays, 1865-1920* (Washington, D.C. and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 51.



Before engaging these case studies or outlining a theoretical framework for analyzing ceremonial repetition, it is important to explore deeper questions of how and why rhetoric and repetition were combined in the first place. Put differently, *what were some of the original premises and motives for using repetition as rhetoric?* Beginning from this line of inquiry allows us to highlight prior observations of repetition from classical theories of education and performance into later analyses on more contemporary methods of practice. In the remainder of this introductory essay, I explore three classical perspectives important to ceremonial repetition, as I've defined it thus far: declamation, *prosopopoeia*, and *ekphrasis*. Though no longstanding framework for analyzing ceremonial repetition exists, a brief review of these classical theories is both appropriate and strategically prudent. In the pages that follow, I argue that these early orientations relating and translating the text to both students and publics establishes a foundation of repetition as an art form. Repetition should be designed to accomplish something for the rhetor or public in question. More directly, however, these classical theories indicate that while repeating the words of others is not a new phenomenon, the qualities of such practice functions best when it is directed toward the production or reappraisal of an artifact.

#### LEARNING VIRTUE: EDUCATION, REPETITION, AND INVENTION

Repetition is the oldest and surest way to learn. In his work *Poetics*, Aristotle claimed that imitation is “inherent in human beings,” elaborating that we “learn our

earliest lessons from imitation.”<sup>19</sup> The re-creation of thoughts, ideas, or language was not universally endorsed among classical philosophers, however. As one might expect, Plato’s description of imitation in the tenth book of *The Republic* rubs contrary to his theory on the realm of ideas: imitation is thrice removed from the original form of ideal truth, partial in relation and “only an image at that.”<sup>20</sup> Plato’s position on imitation distinguished him from other philosophers of education. As Ekaterina Haskins has argued, Plato positioned the impersonation of another as a “woeful inadequacy” in the context of “its corrupting effect on the listener.”<sup>21</sup> Virtue derived from speaking in another’s words was, however, an important step in elementary education for several well-known theorists. In her historical overview of *mimesis* dating back to fifth century BCE Greece, Vivienne Gray elaborates on the varied interpretations of imitation. *Mimesis* denoted “the recreation of reality, encompassing recreation of both character and emotion.”<sup>22</sup> To repeat or imitate was not merely a means of exercising voice, but was also a serious preparation of one’s public ethic: following another’s words was a means to creating “speech in character” by example.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics* in *Classical Literary Criticism* eds and trans., Penelope Murray and T.S. Dorsch (New York: Penguin, 2000), 60-61.

<sup>20</sup> “The art of imitation, therefore, is far removed from truth, and the reason why it produces everything, so it seems, is that it grasps only a small part of any object, and only an image at that. The painter, for example, will paint a cobbler for us, or a carpenter, or any other craftsman, without understanding any of their crafts; but nevertheless, if he is a good painter, he may paint a carpenter and show it from a distance, and deceive children and stupid men into thinking it is a real carpenter.” *Republic*, as printed in Penelope Murray and T.S. Dorsch [trans.], *Classical Literary Criticism* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 44.

<sup>21</sup> Ekaterina V. Haskins, “*Mimesis* Between Poetics and Rhetoric: Performance Culture and Civic Education in Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30 (Summer 2000), 9.

<sup>22</sup> Vivienne Gray, “*Mimesis* in Greek Historical Theory,” *The American Journal of Philology* 108 (Autumn, 1987), 469.

<sup>23</sup> George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric & Its Christian and Secular Tradition From Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 27.

No classical philosopher took imitation more seriously or saw the virtue of this pedagogical tool more clearly than Isocrates. Haskins's summary offers insight into the rigor and value of repetition as a preparatory exercise: "A student of Isocrates for instruction should expect not only to memorize poetry and prose for the sake of gaining facility in speech, but also gradually to become a public person whose actions are worthy of being praised in similar discourses."<sup>24</sup> Repetition was part of a cycle of civic excellence. This logic drew directly from the positive educational benefits of *mimesis*. Haskins further argues that "by identifying with what fictional and historical characters say and do, a student grasps the repertoire of social roles and the range of situations more fully than a person who receives lessons in moral philosophy without 'living' its principles."<sup>25</sup> *Doing* civic affairs emerges from a lived experience charged by the evolving transition of "speech-thought-action."<sup>26</sup> Imitation also cultivates new thoughts. More specifically, repeating another's words was not only cultivating memorization of ideas, but was meant to reveal what Robert Hariman describes as "judgments" on how to move in new situations, as well as "qualities of usage that can succeed only if fitted to the distinctive features of the speaker and the specific situation."<sup>27</sup>

Similar musings on the educational effects of speaking by imitation are evident in other writings from the classical period. George Kennedy has detailed the common rite of passage for students of rhetoric in the *progymnasmata*, including a review of parts of a speech, practice addressing the class and listening as the teacher "declaimed a

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<sup>24</sup> Haskins, "Mimesis Between Poetics and Rhetoric," 14 and 16.

<sup>25</sup> Haskins, "Mimesis Between Poetics and Rhetoric," 21.

<sup>26</sup> Haskins, "Mimesis Between Poetics and Rhetoric," 22.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Hariman, "Civic Education, Classical Education, and Democratic Polity," in *Isocrates and Civic Education*, eds. Takis Poulakos and David Depew (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 222.

speech as a model treatment,” after which students would write a version of the speech from a selected topic.<sup>28</sup> In his study of Greek declamation, D.A. Russell further elaborated that most forms of the declamation exercise—or, to use the Greek equivalent word, “*meletē*”—were defined by two constraints: The exercise was to be “the reproduction” of a “forensic speech or a deliberative one,” and the student was to perform “a complete oration, not just part of one.”<sup>29</sup> Before sophists and philosophers began writing a “systematic teaching of rhetoric,” Russell has argued, “there was already an established tradition of making up speeches in character for a variety of literary purposes.”<sup>30</sup> Practices of the *progymnasmata* varied from imaginary speeches, speech fragments, and whole iterations of discourse, and firmly establish the precedent of repetition as a key tool in Greek education. Notably absent, however, is any mention of pedagogical declamation of ceremonial texts, a key nuance that will be explored in later chapters.

Latin treatises followed the trend set by Greek writers in the fourth and fifth centuries. As Donald Lemen Clark has noted, “belief in the value of imitation was undeviating” for theorists of rhetoric from Isocrates through Saint Augustine.<sup>31</sup> The endgame of imitation, however, was soundly educational: students absorb another’s work to produce their own in the future. In *On the Sublime*, for instance, Longinus proposed that one way to achieve sublimity resides in “the imitation and emulation of

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<sup>28</sup> George Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 83-84.

<sup>29</sup> D.A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 10.

<sup>30</sup> Russell, *Greek Declamation*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1957), 149.

the great writers and poets of the past.”<sup>32</sup> Imitative language was a social value, and, more importantly, considered a means to achieving creativity. Quintilian’s summary of imitation and education further highlights the expectation among educators that miming the old text was a path to forging new discourse:

The boys will thus accustom themselves to the best writings, and they will always have in their memory something which they may imitate and will unconsciously reproduce that model of style which has been impressed upon their minds. They will have command, moreover, an abundance of the best words, phrases, and figures, not sought on the occasion, but offering themselves spontaneously from a treasure house, as it were within them.<sup>33</sup>

Imitating speeches affected students. Or, in Dale Sullivan’s terms, texts left an “impression” on a student that could direct practices of production.<sup>34</sup> Old texts were imagined as germinal frameworks for future fruit is further evident in medieval memory practices. As Mary Carruthers explains, the metaphorical path of a text as it traverses the organs of a student’s body gave new meaning to the idea (and diet) of mental health: “the memory is a stomach, the stored texts are the sweet-smelling cud originally drawn from the gardens of books (or lecture), they are chewed on the palate.”<sup>35</sup>

Though declamation exercises were vital to one’s rhetorical education, writers past and present have articulated fear of relying too heavily on repetition as a statement unto itself. Indeed, the status of repetition hinged upon practitioners moving beyond the text, even as remnants of its presence lingered. Faith in a mimetic pedagogy, though absent from U.S. curriculum since roughly the nineteenth-century, has recently re-

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<sup>32</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 131.

<sup>33</sup> Quintilian quoted in Donald Leman Clark, “Imitation: Theory and Practice in Roman Rhetoric” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 19.

<sup>34</sup> Dale Sullivan, “Attitudes Toward Imitation: Classical Culture and the Modern Temper” *Rhetoric Review* 8 (Fall 1995): 5.

<sup>35</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 206.

emerged in contemporary scholarship.<sup>36</sup> Robert Terrill's suggestion that a mimetic pedagogy will reinvigorate the values of citizenship in the twenty-first century reaffirms the parameters of imitation as a path to civic engagement. Imitation, Terrill explains, is a way to "take on some characteristics of the exemplar, but never to *become* the exemplar."<sup>37</sup> Extending his point further, he argues that a situated speech—the most reliable form of rhetoric—"may have been a fitting response to a particular past situation," but a routine repetition planted in a present context would be "absurd, and perhaps repulsive."<sup>38</sup> Terrill's observations have genuine value beyond his admirable advocacy for education built on civic consciousness. His orientation of repetition obligates one to focus on when, or under what circumstances, repetition is meaningful. The suggestion, however, that repeating a text out of context may be easily dismissed not only misses larger potentials for rhetorical criticism on the life of public address, but also ignores key facets of classical rhetorical theory that would allow—even commend—the effort of citizens to briefly become their subject while speaking their words. With this tension in mind, I now turn to consider more closely the stylistic purpose of rhetorical personification and its relation to ceremonial repetition.

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<sup>36</sup> Nan Johnson provides a careful summary of imitation as a pedagogical tool in this era: "The assumption that the study and imitation of an exemplary literacy canon is a crucial means of acquiring a command of eloquent communication was incorporated in nineteenth-century theory as a normative premise." See: Nan Johnson, *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 83.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Terrill, "Mimesis, Duality, and Rhetorical Education" *Rhetorical Society Quarterly* 41 (2011), 303.

<sup>38</sup> Terrill, "Mimesis, Duality, and Rhetorical Education," 303.

## REPETITION AND PRESENCE

Personification has been the subject of expansive rhetorical and literary theory for ages and remains a powerful strategy for bringing presence to those who are absent and voice to those who are silent. Paul Ricoeur is sensitive to the point of temporality and the texture of repetition. “The creative power of repetition is contained entirely in this power of opening up the past again to the future,” he writes, further noting, “repetition can be considered an ontological recasting of the gesture of historiography, seized in its most fundamental intentionality.”<sup>39</sup> In his ambitious study on the intricacies of human communication, John Durham Peters ponders the technological advances that sustain traces of a message beyond an author’s physical life. He writes, “we can read the traces of the dead, but we cannot interact directly with them.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, our interaction with dead authors becomes a textbook case of hermeneutics, or, what Peters calls, “the art of interpretation where no return message can be received.”<sup>41</sup> As an important component to classical arts and drama, *mimesis* was a performative “re-enactment” of “events of myth,” that could take a variety of forms, both in “speech alone, or on the level of speech combined with bodily movement” for added effect.<sup>42</sup>

Ceremonial repetition closely mirrors the process of performing the identity of dead or inanimate objects normally attributed to personification. Here both the identity of the writer and the speaker are recast. In provocative fashion, Walter Burkert called

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<sup>39</sup> Paul Ricoeur [trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer], *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 380.

<sup>40</sup> John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into The Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 149.

<sup>41</sup> Peters, *Speaking Into the Air*, 149.

<sup>42</sup> “Mimesis,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 1: Classical Criticism*, ed. George A. Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 47.

personification “a meeting of linguistics, morality, and religion in the house of rhetoric.”<sup>43</sup> In more precise terms, personification is traditionally considered the act of enlivening non-human objects through speech—“fear has stricken me,” “sorrow eats my heart,” or “time is running by.”<sup>44</sup> The stylistic device offers speakers the chance to mimic the dead and create a sense of presence beyond the grave. Again, the function of such invocation was primarily educational. Conjuring the dead was a common exercise throughout the *progymnasmata* manuals. George Kennedy provides the example of Aphthonius, who prescribed fourteen exercises related to declamation, including three branches of personification: “eidolopoeia,” or speech that is “attributed to the ghost of a known person,” “*prosopopoeia*,” or the general personification of “an imaginary or mythological character,” and “*ethopoeia*,” or the personification of a historical character.”<sup>45</sup> James Paxon extends this observation, noting that *prosopopoeia*, the general connotation of personification, was likely “a means of mimetic character invention before it described mode of rhetorical ornamentation.”<sup>46</sup> Like the central idea of a mimetic education, *prosopopoeia* could help students find their own voice by speaking through the words of another.

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<sup>43</sup> Walker Burkert, Hesiod in Context: Abstractions and Divinities in an Aegean-Eastern koiné,” in Emma Stafford and Judith Herrin (eds), *Personification in the Greek World: From Antiquity to Byzantium* (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2005), 3.

<sup>44</sup> Burkert, “Hesoid in Context,” 4.

<sup>45</sup> George Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*, 205-206.

<sup>46</sup> James Paxon, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009 [1994]), 13.



*Prosopopoeia* also functioned in a dual sense to both “represen[t] an absent person as present,”<sup>47</sup> and also display a speaker’s appropriated character, or as the root translation of the term defines, “to make a face” (*proson* and *poein*).<sup>48</sup> The variety of people whose voice might be appropriated has varied throughout the history of personification theory, from the useful measure of taking on a “hypothetical voice” in a law exercise, to the notion that, if effective, a speaker employing *prosopopoeia* “will (if only briefly) become some other person.”<sup>49</sup> Presumably, a distinction between hypothetical character appropriation and historical character appropriation would be marked in the difference between what José Antonio Mayoral calls the two subsets of *prosopopoeia*: “‘indirect discourse’ (*prosopopoeia oblique*)” and “‘direct discourse’ (*prosopopoeia recta*).”<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, C. Jan Swearingen has highlighted the long history of imitation and the construction of a public persona. As she argues, the contemporary focus on authenticity was not a concern in classical theory: *ethos*, or the “projected apparent character” and *prosopopoeia*, or “speaking the words of another in order to learn, understand, persuade and communicate,” were both accepted and widely practiced ways in which speakers imitated the words of others in order to “*find a second self*.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> [Cicero] [trans. Harry Caplan], *Rhetorical ad Herennium* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 399.

<sup>48</sup> Paxon, *The Poetics of Personification*, 39.

<sup>49</sup> Paxon, *Poetics of Personification*, 17; James Jasinski, *Sourcebook of Rhetoric* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE, 2001), 555.

<sup>50</sup> José Antonio Mayoral, “Prosopopoeia,” in Thomas O. Sloane (ed), *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 637; Also see Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms, Second Edition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 71 and 123.

<sup>51</sup> C. Jan Swearingen, “*Ethos*: Imitation, Impersonation, and Voice,” in *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*, eds, James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994), 119.

Rhetorical and literary theorists do not present *prosopopoeia* as an exercise of ceremonial repetition. Indeed, examples of repeating a rhetorical text wholesale—word-by-word—appears on first sight as a cue of personification taken too literally. However, the stylistic device—particularly in its rich history of appropriated character—introduces the importance of perceived subjectivity within the act of repetition. Though the Declaration of Independence or the Emancipation Proclamation may not invite listeners to see the shadow of their authorial ghosts in the act of reading, these performances indicate both a relationship with the past forged in repetition, as well as a purposeful transition of character—or fashioning a second self—described by Swearingen. As *prosopopoeia* indicates, repetition isn't about the text alone. It concerns the new relationship between the speaker, the dead author's voice, and the words bridging the two.

Repetition plays a key functional purpose in public address. Further, repetition of discourse pulls our focus to the standing of the speaker and the text alike, as each are in a state of appropriating the character of the other within the moment of turning words of the past into meaning in the present. If *prosopopoeia* helps us understand the significance of breaking the quiet between a text's original delivery and its latest iteration, the final concept for our preliminary canvas of rhetorical theory helps us comprehend the significance of speech that is displayed, performed, and made visible before an audience. Though *ekphrasis* does not pertain precisely to repetition per se, it remains the best longstanding concept that speaks to the process of presenting language to an audience, and addresses the implications of repetition on shaping the meaning of

words within a listener's private imagination as well as the tangible sense of public display.

## IMAGINING THE WORDS OF OTHERS

Ceremonial repetition showcases a speech text. Exercises of declamation and *prosopopoeia* affirm the rich history of reciting texts for different educational and rhetorical purposes. To better comprehend the presentation of discourse that is inherent to ceremonial repetition, we must better understand the classical concept of *ekphrasis* and the implications of moving a text from its environment on the page to one of the lived experience. *Ekphrasis* is derived from the Greek terms *ek* ("out") and *phrasein* ("speak").<sup>52</sup> As a rhetorical function, the term refers to a litany of possible actions open to a diverse range of meaning.<sup>53</sup> Surviving texts of the *progymnasmata* attribute *ekphrasis* with expository or descriptive speech "bringing the thing shown vividly before the eyes."<sup>54</sup> Composing such work traditionally came after mastering narrative, encomium, and ethopoiia, all exercises that cultivated a student's ability to engage an accomplished level of vividness in their speech.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Claire Barbetti, *Ekphrastic Medieval Visions: A New Discussion in Interparts Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 5.

<sup>53</sup> Barbetti, *Ekphrastic Medieval Visions*, 142; Ruth Webb supports the generally ambiguous nature of the term, calling its varied applications "vague and elusive, though essential to understanding the relations of audience, speakers, and words." See: Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination, and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham, Surrey (England): Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 3.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Liz James and Ruth Webb, "'To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places: Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium.'" *Art History* 14 (1) 1991: 4. Also see: *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, s.v. "EKPHRASIS, ecphrasis (Gr. "description," pl. ekphraseis)," accessed July 03, 2012, [http://www.credoreference.com/entry/prpoety/ekphrasis\\_ecphrasis\\_gr\\_description\\_pl\\_ekphraseis](http://www.credoreference.com/entry/prpoety/ekphrasis_ecphrasis_gr_description_pl_ekphraseis); Also see: Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. Publishers), 1957.

<sup>55</sup> James and Webb, "'To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places: Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium,'" 4.

Engaging the imagination is familiar in some of the earliest treatises on the power of speech. In his “Encomium of Helen,” the Greek sophist Gorgias compared human reaction to frightening images to the power of speech on the imagination: “In this way the sight engraves upon the mind images of things which have been seen. And many frightening impressions linger, and what lingers is exactly analogous to [what is] spoken.”<sup>56</sup> Aristotle’s discussion of metaphors in the third book of *On Rhetoric* profiles the “urbanities” of metaphors and comparisons that succeeded by “bringing-before-the-eyes” a subject to an audience.<sup>57</sup> When speech gives *energeia* to its subjects, Aristotle noted, the metaphor—and the image it creates—is achieved by verbally “making the lifeless things living” within the speech.<sup>58</sup> Francis Bacon, moreover, summarized the utility of rhetoric as the process to “apply reason to imagination for the better moving of the will.”<sup>59</sup> In Bacon’s conception, rhetoric required imagination, for unless a virtue is demonstrated to “the imagination in lively representation” through speech, its meaning may be lost.<sup>60</sup> To engage an imagination, Burke argued, was a “reordering objects of sense, or taking them apart and imagining them in new combinations (such as centaurs) that do not themselves derive from sensory experience.”<sup>61</sup> Preoccupation with the relationship between rhetoric and the imagination was a central focus to rhetorical

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<sup>56</sup> Gorgias, “Encomium of Helen” in Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (eds), *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2001), 46.

<sup>57</sup> Aristotle [Trans. George Kennedy], *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 248.

<sup>58</sup> Aristotle [Trans. George Kennedy], *On Rhetoric*, 249.

<sup>59</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 149.

<sup>60</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, 150.

<sup>61</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 79.

theorists, not only in the contemporary sense, but also in the methods and practices by which the verbal was made visible.

As Ruth Webb argues, the use of language to stir a visual image in the mind of an audience was essential in rhetorical practice, particularly as “the reception of texts remained an essentially aural experience.”<sup>62</sup> In her impressive overview, Webb notes that ancient definitions of *ekphrasis* are enriching to our understanding of the relationship between speakers, audiences, and the power of words.<sup>63</sup> Classical educators were concerned with grooming students’ ability not only to speak well in a sense of civic excellence, Webb writes, but also to exercise a connection between speech and imagination. As James and Webb clarify, *ekphrasis* was the sole activity of the *progymnasmata* that was “defined in terms of its effect on the audience” and not “by its content or scope.”<sup>64</sup>

The transformative implications of *ekphrasis* make for a durable and elastic frame for understanding how words are translated across different mediums of communication. *Ekphrasis* is, by definition, a “linguistically impossible” feat of translation via medium: “Language translates thoughts into words,” while *ekphrasis* “translates the visible into words which are somehow communicated as a visual experience to the audience.”<sup>65</sup> Instead of using words to craft an image in the mind of the audience, the ceremonial repetition of speech presents audiences with an image of

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<sup>62</sup> Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination, and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham, Surrey (England): Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 26.

<sup>63</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination, and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, 3.

<sup>64</sup> James and Webb, “To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places: Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium,” 6.

<sup>65</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination, and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, 52 and 58.

discourse via form: words presented in voice and sight. Claire Barbetti's study of *ekphrasis* in medieval contexts adds a greater level of support for connecting ceremonial repetition and *ekphrasis*. As Barbetti explains, *ekphrasis* is "part of the process of making a mental model of a composition," and, in this sense, "needs to be thought of as a verb, not a noun."<sup>66</sup> Even more, Barbetti claims, *ekphrasis* is not beset to the linear trajectory from image to word, but is rather a composite collection of engaging "memory, translation, interpretation," among other things as "a composition translating another composition."<sup>67</sup> Texts are always in process of moving across medium, whether they are verbal, visual, or other. The expository texture of *ekphrasis* is applicable in the "translation from one medium into another," the likes of which may include "*reverse ekphrasis*" or some variant.<sup>68</sup>

Principles of *ekphrasis* move our attention to how form contributes to a public image of a text. Quintilian's discussion of *enargeia*—a close approximation to *ekphrasis*—is especially illuminating to this point, Webb argues. Bringing words before the eyes of an audience doesn't happen naturally, Webb continues, but is instead most effective when it acts as a "re-presentation of familiar and accepted material," which constitutes a visualization, not of the object or thing described, but of "the effect of seeing that thing" to the audience."<sup>69</sup> The effective use of *ekphrasis*, she posits, extends or re-presents an image familiar to the audience to activate "the images already stored in

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<sup>66</sup> Barbetti, *Ekphrastic Medieval Visions*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Barbetti, *Ekphrastic Medieval Visions*, 11.

<sup>68</sup> Barbetti, *Ekphrastic Medieval Visions*, 142.

<sup>69</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination, and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, 122.

the listener's mind" throughout the speech between speaker and listener.<sup>70</sup> Part of visualizing the text, in other words, means aligning images of cultural memory by which a text can be understood and made familiar. The connection between the classical theory and the contemporary practice is not a direct overlap, but is another way of enriching the texture of repetition beyond a rote looping of words. Webb's thesis on the fragmentary and evolving form of *ekphrasis* sheds important light on the relative, though not consistent, similarities to ceremonial repetition. One episode of *ekphrasis* does not necessarily relate to another via a close framework of intricate components, Webb suggests. However, taking *ekphrasis* seriously means studying "the individual's relation to the word and the intersection between language, memory, and imagination."<sup>71</sup>

*Ekphrasis* offers two important insights that help frame the development of this analysis. First, ceremonial repetition as I've described it appears to maintain the original concern with words and images presented before the audience, but in a reverse flow of direction, shifting from a concern with the vision affected in words to the displayed vision of words. The repetition of speech is, furthermore, also a *re-presentation* of speech, providing a new image of discourse as an object of communal recollection and, even more, presenting different forms of display familiar to an audience's disposition. *Ekphrasis* is repetition of sorts. It "is not only a form of mimesis," notes Grant F. Scott, "but a cunning attempt to transform and master the image by inscribing it": a repetition

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<sup>70</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination, and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, 127.

<sup>71</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination, and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, 195.

and a translation of an image.<sup>72</sup> By translating an image to words (or vice versa), the act of repetition begets change, not constancy.

## CONCLUSION

Though ceremonial repetition inherits ideas from classical theories of declamation, *prosopopoeia*, and *ekphrasis*, it remains a distinctive blend of public address and visual display with important insights yet to be uncovered. At the center of our study resides the question of what audiences and publics are doing with rhetorical texts and to what effect. In their influential study *The New Rhetoric*, Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca illustrate the virtues of repetition in the context of argumentation theory. “A man, a social class, a period can be typified,” the authors write, “by the models they adopt and their way of looking at them.”<sup>73</sup> In a similar regard, ceremonial repetition is both a communal argument of presence and importance, as well as a re-fashioning—within a cultural and political moment—of how publics imagine texts as artifacts of communal memory. Drawing out the central importance of a text’s particular form helps us move beyond the questions of presence, and move into deeper relationships forged in the act of repetition as they align or deviate from the traditional context of public speech.

This review of concepts central to classical rhetorical theory has proven that the intellectual resources to account for the rhetoric of repetition are diverse, and offer a compelling point for considering repetition as a productive rhetorical exercise. Terrill’s

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<sup>72</sup> Grant F. Scott, “The Rhetoric of Dilation: Ekphrasis and Ideology.” *Word & Image* 7 (4) (October-December 1991): 302.

<sup>73</sup> Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca [trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver], *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008 [1969], 364.



earlier point on the limits of repetition should be taken seriously, however. After all, the transition of imitation from the classical *progymnasmata* to contemporary commemoration shifts attention away from rhetorical invention as it is conventionally understood: instead of favoring imitation as a *first* step to creating something new, public iterations position repetition as a rhetorical gesture of its own, absent the sense of discovery or engagement that defines the art of rhetoric. Indeed, Quintilian's praise and cautious limit on the virtues of imitation should be instructive to rhetorical scholars today: "imitation alone is not sufficient, if only for the reason that a sluggish nature is only too ready to rest content with the inventions of others."<sup>74</sup> As the history of rhetoric has shown, imitation has its limits.<sup>75</sup> It would be unwise to expect past speeches to fulfill the needs of the present in every situation. The inventive discovery of arguments—with the help of past models—allows for a more fulfilling exploration of ideas and relationships. Yet, it is possible to advocate the continued expansion of rhetorical invention while also accounting for the creative possibility imbued in reimagining the words of others in ceremonial repetition. The moments of repetition under consideration in this study are not tools to cultivate individual students' imagination and invention of speech. When removed from the private study of rote tutelage, repetition engages a *public* imagination, and hence should be understood and

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<sup>74</sup> Quintilian doesn't mince words in his distinction between imitation and art, offering the comparison between a shadow and its substance. See: Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria*, Vol. IV, trans. by H. E. Butler (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922), Book X. Ch. II. 4 (77).

<sup>75</sup> Examples of repetition applied to an absurd degree come to mind. George Kennedy's summary of Renaissance humanists is instructive to the stifling effect of close imitation. So dedicated to the classical style and standard, many "sought to use no Latin word that could not be found in Cicero, as well as to imitate his composition sentences." See: George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition From Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 239.

studied as public persuasion. When we recognize that repeating another's words can constitute new relations in the world, or reaffirm existing perceptions between the living and the dead, we may discover more life in repetition than previously considered.

Classical theories and practice of declamation, *prosopopoeia*, and *ekphrasis* raise instructive questions about the continued practice of repetition. As this study progresses, we will encounter historical cases wherein the importance of these concepts will be advanced, expanded, or proven adaptable to unforeseen contexts. Though the preceding review helps situate repetition in an educational context, our concern with repetition will follow the practice into public settings of ceremonial display, and require additional tools of interpretation. In chapter two I summarize and extend our theoretical reach to better understand repetition as a rhetorical act. Beyond the limited frame of declamation exercises, constitutive rhetoric offers a way of studying language as subject to expansive meaning and application. Like the concern of subjectivity implied in *prosopopoeia*, I will also consider how repeating the words of another within an epideictic context provides opportunities to both invoke and share a sense of shared subjectivity through the act of repetition. Finally, I offer insight from contemporary sources on the relationship between words and images, as well as the bodily enactment of communal memory at the root of ceremonial repetition.

Bringing a speech into a new context relies on certain deliberative choices in reimagining the original form of public address. Speech is both made visible in performance and display, but is also designed to interact with different symbolic expressions within a given epideictic moment. To repeat a speech, in short, is also to

visualize a speech and extend its constitutive capacity as public memory. While the mimetic model of education sought to instill civic virtue in students mouthing the words of others, the contemporary position of repetition in the context of remembering together raises further implications on the place of public virtue bound up in a moment of iteration. Lastly, I address important implications of positioning a speech text as a common object of public memory, and issues of interpretive communities that emerge within such frameworks.

Chapters three, four, five, and six represent case studies of analysis. Accounting for ceremonial repetition in the American experience is unfathomable. However, each selected text and performance featured in these chapters illustrates the phenomenon in a way that adds to our understanding of its implications, possibilities, and consequences. Chapter three focuses on the extensional life of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, and its position in August First celebrations following the Civil War. Specifically, this chapter analyzes the peculiar character of the Emancipation Proclamation, and how, unlike other texts repeated, it relies on the discursive invocations and extensions to negotiate its meaning. To clarify this point, I analyze the ceremonial rhetoric of Frederick Douglass who, as keynote speaker on a variety of occasions, gives us insight into how the discourse in conjunction of repetition directed public interpretations of the text within the moment of its new performance. This essay presents what is perhaps the most conventional approach to accounting for the meaning of ceremonial repetition in that the primary objects of analysis are speech texts.

Chapter four focuses on how the channel by which the public images at text alters the landscape of ceremonial repetition. This essay focuses on the 1862 celebrations of George Washington's birthday and the overlapping political and public recitations of his 1796 Farewell Address. This event was equally distinctive for government orchestration as it was for public participation. Instead of focusing on only the discourse around the repetition of Washington's Farewell Address, however, I position the repetition of the text within the context of the illustration of the event featured in the popular newsprint *Harper's Weekly*, and the potential of remembering discourse within the explicit *visualization* of public address through the hybrid reading of text and image.

Chapter five offers additional insight to habits of repetition for Washington's Farewell Address, but within a different timeframe. Here I analyze the longstanding commemoration of Washington's birthday from the institutional perspective of the United States Senate. America's deliberative body—which has been reading the document aloud for 110 years (as of this writing)—represents a unique case wherein the austere reading of the text marks the beginning and end of the commemoration insofar as the public is concerned. The Senate's maintenance of a paper journal to record the thoughts and reflections of individual Senators who read the address—privately held and, until recently, secret—marks a distinctively personal and *inward* shift in our understanding of ceremonial repetition. Though this essay focuses largely on private comments associated to the act of repetition, the Senate's practice offers insight to refine

our expectations on how texts may thrive or wither as public memories, and how such practices provide insight to the maintenance of texts and communities of memory alike.

Chapter six offers criticism of the most contemporary treatments of texts by way of ceremonial repetition. Here I analyze four separate moments and modes of repetition united by the common style of delivery. These examples exemplify the recent trend to splinter texts into fragments delivered through a collective performance. This mode of delivery is apparent in respective video productions of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and the Declaration of Independence. The same habit is also evident in the U.S. House of Representatives' reading of the Constitution in January 2011, as well as the emerging tradition of reading King's "I Have a Dream" speech by elementary school students. By considering these occasions together, I argue that contemporary methods of ceremonial repetition have given way to a networked method of performing and understanding the text, with varying results and consequences for each practice.

The final chapter offers closing thoughts of how the varied approaches to analyzing ceremonial repetition alter our understanding of the relationship between rhetoric and repetition. Removed from its original time and place, speech exists and persists as public memory, and as such, provides communities with an opportunity to forge a collective experience and translate a sense of public virtue from its imbued meaning in repetition. As we move first to building a set of methodological presumptions to explore the various forms of ceremonial repetition, we should remain mindful of the important possibilities of witnessing a text's extended life through words,

images, and methods of enactment that re-present, reinvigorate, and nurture its sustained relevancy as a necessary aid to remembering together.

## CHAPTER II

### LIVING TEXTS

*The meaning of a text is thus not simply to be found within it, to be dug out like a mineral treasure, nor does it come from the reader, as if he were a kind of movie projector. It resides in the life of reading itself, to which both text and reader contribute.*

—James Boyd White.<sup>1</sup>

#### SPEECH AS PUBLIC MEMORY

In his literary work *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino introduces readers to a dreamlike borough called Zora. Unlike other places, Zora is unforgettable. “This city,” Calvino writes, “...is like an armature, a honey-comb in whose cells each of us can place the things he wants to remember: names of famous men, virtues, numbers, vegetable and mineral classifications, dates of battles, constellations, parts of speech.”<sup>2</sup> Holding and sustaining multiple objects in tandem makes Zora a tempting but fatal residence. “[F]orced to remain motionless and always the same, in order to be more easily remembered,” the city succumbs to being “languished, disintegrated, disappeared.”<sup>3</sup> Constancy prompts decay. Could Zora be sustained under conditions of change? Does memory require a stable structure to endure?

Calvino’s poetic illustration asks us to consider the stability and perceived rigidity of repetition as a rhetorical act. Denotative associations of repetition are rarely praiseworthy, often focusing on the return of something, often in rote, recurring, or

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<sup>1</sup> James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 16.

replicated form.<sup>4</sup> Presumably, repetition aids in retention through a considerable amount of real or perceived sameness, the very quality that led to Zora's downfall. If words were akin to bricks in their physical constancy, the comparison between the repetition of a speech and a sturdy (and untenable) environment of memory would be apt. Within the discursive space of repetition—however consistent a routine or practice may seem—the presentation of form always arises from choice and the dismissal of its alternatives. Can ceremonial repetition ever nurture and sustain memory while staving off its own deterioration? In what ways, moreover, does the practice of ceremonial repetition lend itself to critical appraisal? Answering the second question helps us confront the essential notion of evaluation bound up in the first. By shifting from the conventional sense of repetition as rigidity to a more nuanced perspective that accounts for the choice in design and form, we can better distinguish and evaluate repetition as the sustenance of textual life and repetition as rhetorical taxidermy.

Proposing a critical framework for analyzing ceremonial repetition is not easy. Few scholars have seriously considered analysis of speech texts beyond their immediate context of delivery, and even less have confronted the rhetorical implications of repetition as a strategy of remembrance. This chapter begins by categorizing ceremonial repetition within the theory of constitutive rhetoric. Specifically, I highlight what scholars have defined as extensional constitutive rhetoric, or how the meaning of a text is expanded through public appropriation and invocation, and not confined by original

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<sup>4</sup> Some neutral attitudes toward the word include “recital” or “restoration”; one particularly unattractive definition cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* illustrates the often poor standing of *repetition*: “The return of a taste or flavor, some time after food or drink has been swallowed, as a result of belching or indigestion.” See: Repetition, n.1 Third edition, December 2009; online version March 2012. [<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/162794>] accessed 18 May 2012.



authorial intentions. As epideictic display, ceremonial repetition inherits components that will inform how the iteration of speech contributes to conceptions of public virtue through shared memory and visual display, each of which are important avenues for future analysis. Finally, I introduce a framework for gauging the implications of political subjectivity inherent from constitutive rhetoric and commemorative identities. This final question pertains to the sustenance of certain public philosophies through the treatment of a text and its public display. As my discussion of these three theoretical frameworks illustrates, ceremonial repetition is a rhetorical phenomena that should be understood through what James Boyd White calls the “life of reading,” where memory, author, and audience converge and texts live anew.

#### RECONSTITUTING A TEXT: INHERITED AND EXTENDED MEANING

Contrary to the belief that repetition either requires sameness or leads to a point of diminished quality, numerous scholars have positioned repetition as a process of continuation and regeneration. Sociologist Anthony Giddens posits that repetition is central to understanding the evolving character of human relationships. Giddens’s important term “structuration” refers to the ongoing construction of meaning between individuals and the institutions they inhabit. Language is the key component of structuration: “language has structure, language has form, but it isn’t visible and it is only ‘there’ in so far as it actually forms part of what people do in their day-to-day use of it.”<sup>5</sup> Meaning, in short, has to be practiced repeatedly. Constancy and change are also interrelated by practice: change is always a *possible* outcome, but our presumptions

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<sup>5</sup> Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998), 76.

of social life are made resonant by impressions from “social reproduction.”<sup>6</sup> What we perceive as sameness, Giddens suggests, is only a result of social maintenance over an alternate choice. The human practices of language, Giddens elaborates, is central to this understanding. “Every instance of the use of language is a potential modification of that language at the same time as it acts to reproduce it.”<sup>7</sup> Hollow forms of habit and looped consumer messages persist. Yet, the potential for alteration and change is equally steadfast. The notion of an *exact* repetition of a previous act is, by Giddens’s theory of structuration, nonviable. The sustenance—if any—derived from repetition is derived from both authors and readers, or, more precisely, from the continued momentum readers pass on from authors. Texts, in this regard become “the concrete medium and outcome of a process of production, reflexively monitored by its author and reader.”<sup>8</sup>

The productive value of repetition is also central to Judith Butler’s theory of linguistic representation. Like Giddens, Butler argues that repetition produces meaning. Some linguistic acts embody a characteristic wherein meaning returns to its author “in a different form,” indicating that the act “is not a momentary happening, but a certain nexus of temporal horizons, the condensations of iterability that exceeds the moment it occasions.”<sup>9</sup> Time and space meet in speech acts, and shift the position of textual agency away from the author. “The speaker assumes responsibility precisely through the citational character of speech,” Butler argues, continuing, “The speaker renews the

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<sup>6</sup> Giddens and Pierson, *Conversations*, 89.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 220.

<sup>8</sup> Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*, 43.

<sup>9</sup> Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 14.

linguistic tokens of a community, reissuing and reinvigorating such speech. Responsibility is thus linked with speech as repetition, not origination.”<sup>10</sup> A speech act is cultural inheritance passed on. To understand the meaning of language, Butler posits, we must study its public use. “One speaks a language that is never fully one’s own,” she claims, “but that language only persists through repeated occasions of that invocation. That language gains its temporal life only in and through the utterances that reinvoke and restructure the conditions of its own possibility.”<sup>11</sup> Giddens and Butler offer distinctive visions of repetition as necessary to sustaining meaning itself. Less a mimicking of the original by the replica, repetition is a sustaining return, reaffirmation, or reconstitution of a public language. How—and with what implications—such a position may be transferred from the study of individual words and phrases to the ongoing recitation of a comprehensive speech text is a question I now consider within the theory of constitutive rhetoric.

The history of rhetorical theory is an ongoing story of how critics have taken fewer components of the textual encounter for granted. This is evident in the transition from focusing on argumentative appeals and canons of discourse central to Neo-Aristotelianism to later scrutiny of words and images under the rubric of “symbolic action.”<sup>12</sup> This history does not offer a clear framework for analyzing the repetition of

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<sup>10</sup> Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 140.

<sup>12</sup> The record of this development is covered in numerous sources: Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1969; Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press), 1978; Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, “The Idea of Rhetoric in the Rhetoric of Science,” in *Rhetorical Hermeneutics: Invention and Interpretation in the Age of Science*, eds. Alan G. Gross and William M. Keith (Albany: State University of New York, 1997), 25-88; Robert Hariman, “Afterword: Relocating the Art of Public Address,” in

speech texts. However, distinguishing rhetoric's functional and constitutive capacities invites an accessible mode of framing the process of repetition within rhetorical theory. According to James Jasinski, the distinction between these two perspectives is determined by how critics position the context of speech emerging in the realm of human relations. "Functionalist" perspectives focus on speech as a mode of influence to "an immediate audience" with the speaker attempting to solve "a particular problem or exigence."<sup>13</sup> A public apology might be scrutinized, for example, as a way to understand how different modes of appeal are designed to assuage public perceptions. Constitutive analysis, by contrast, analyzes language as representative and world creating. Words "create what they describe as they simultaneously describe what they create."<sup>14</sup> The distinction between functionalist and constitutive frameworks is not mutually exclusive, and ceremonial repetition is one example wherein a sense of each perspective is important. However, as I explain in the paragraphs that follow, a constitutive framework represents the best starting point by which we may position ceremonial repetition as a phenomenon accessible to critical analysis.

As one of the foremost theorists of constitutive discourse, James Boyd White defines rhetoric as "the study of ways we constitute ourselves as individuals, as

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*Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed, Thomas W. Benson (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 163-184; For a cogent argument on the links between rhetorical theory and the emergence of visual rhetoric, see: Lester C. Olson, "Intellectual and Conceptual Resources for Visual Rhetoric: A Re-examination of Scholarship Since 1950," *The Review of Communication* 7(1) (2007): 1-20.

<sup>13</sup> James Jasinski, "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography: Toward an Understanding of the Discursive (Re)constitution of 'Constitution' in *The Federalist Papers*" in *Doing Rhetorical History: Conceptions and Cases*, ed, Kathleen Turner (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 73.

<sup>14</sup> Jasinski, "A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography," 74.

communities, and as cultures, whenever we speak.”<sup>15</sup> Identity and relationships become known only through words used to bring subjectivities into being. For White constitutive rhetoric includes “*all* language activity that goes into the constitution of actual human cultures and communities.”<sup>16</sup> Maurice Charland, another important theorist of constitutive rhetoric, argues that the identification of a subject shifts attention to “the textual nature of social being.”<sup>17</sup> Subjects are brought into being, ascribed a collective identity, a collective history, and given expected actions within a historical identity through language.<sup>18</sup> “Constitution precedes persuasion,” Charland has clarified,” but persuasion can still occur.”<sup>19</sup> By inheriting and reconstituting language, White further suggests, speakers are defining a textual community forged through speech “in the ways in which it invites its reader to become active in engaging with it.”<sup>20</sup> To analyze rhetoric as a constitutive phenomenon abolishes any perceived separation between language and culture: language is inherited from culture; culture is constituted and reconstituted by language.<sup>21</sup>

Jasinski elaborates the possibilities of constitutive rhetoric as a tool for analyzing the language as inherited public practice. Specifically, Jasinski argues that constitutive

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<sup>15</sup> James Boyd White, *Heracles' Bow: Essays on the Rhetoric and Poetics of the Law* (Madison and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 39.

<sup>16</sup> White, *Heracles' Bow*, 39 (*emphasis* in original).

<sup>17</sup> Maurice Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Quebecois*,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 137.

<sup>18</sup> Maurice Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, ed. Thomas O. Sloane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 617.

<sup>19</sup> Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” 617.

<sup>20</sup> James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 282. Also see: *Heracles' Bow*, 45-46.

<sup>21</sup> White elaborates: “Since the text—whether it is an argument, a poem, or a work of history or philosophy—is always a reconstitution of the culture, it is necessarily *about* the culture, whether it idealizes it, ironically repudiates it, or elaborates its incoherences. The text is not a closed system but an artifact made by one mind and offered to another; it recreates the materials of the world for use in the world.” See: *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 280.

discourse embodies two realms of creative potential. The distinction merits close attention: “Intentionally, texts exhibit constitutive potential through the invitations inscribed in various discursive forms (tropes, arguments, etc.). Extensionally, texts exhibit constitutive force through the cultural circulation and discursive articulation of their textual forms in ways that enable and constrain subsequent practice.”<sup>22</sup> Texts create relationships, arguments, and positions for audiences in the world. Audiences, in turn, “appropriate, articulate, circulate, and/or subvert these textual forms in ways that release and transform their potential constitutive energy.”<sup>23</sup> This formulation represents an ideal starting point for analysis of ceremonial repetition. By attending to the extensional constitution of speech texts, or, using Butler’s terminology, the later iterations of speech acts, critics reverse the traditional lineage between author to audience, and attend to the creative ways in which audiences inherit, incorporate, and invoke meaning passed down to them *from authors*. Such a constitutive approach recognizes, in Jasinski’s words, that “language itself is (re)constituted through performance.”<sup>24</sup> In their study of respective state resolutions written by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in response to the 1798 Alien and Sedition Acts, for example, James Jasinski and Jennifer Mercieca illustrate how this analytical perspective might be applied. First, they analyze the intentional or “interior” invitation of the texts, explaining how “discourse constitutes individual and group identities,” including an orientation and commitment of key terms and perceptions of time and space.<sup>25</sup> Next,

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<sup>22</sup> Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography,” 74.

<sup>23</sup> Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography,” 75.

<sup>24</sup> Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography,” 78.

they explore the extensional or “exterior” legacy of the resolutions, or how circulation and reception demonstrated “the way constitutive invitations become realized, and constitutive legacies established.”<sup>26</sup>

Studies on extensional constitutive rhetoric have not examined ceremonial repetition at length. However, few interpretive actions are more closely parallel to the process of reconstituting language through performance than the act of ceremonial repetition. As White has stated, understanding constitutive rhetoric begins by asking what kind of world an author creates within a text. The extensional study of texts pushes the question further. Critics ask how that world re-appears and is altered in certain ways or reconstituted in the broader circulation of the text. Repetition reworks texts as a new voice or melody alters the seemingly fixed nature of old lyrics.<sup>27</sup> Form influences

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<sup>25</sup> James Jasinski and Jennifer Mercieca, “Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the ‘Principles of ‘98’” in Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (eds), *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 320.

<sup>26</sup> James Jasinski and Jennifer Mercieca, “Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics,” 333.

<sup>27</sup> Consider some examples from popular culture to illustrate this point. Does anyone remember that Otis Redding was the original author of a song titled “Respect,” made famous by Aretha Franklin’s later cover? In the original version, Redding pleads with his female partner, to whom he has dedicated significant time and money, “All I’m asking is for a little respect when I come home.” Few would deny that “Respect” is now Franklin’s song, or that the denotative associations of the text have been reconstituted in its cultural circulation as a call for fairness that resonates with multiple movements for gender and racial equality (not the equity of a romantic relationship), all from merely editing the last four words of the refrain and the persona of the singer. Franklin has noted, “It [“Respect”] was...one of the battle cries of the civil rights movement. The song took on monumental significance. It became the “Respect” women expected from men and men expected from women, the inherent right of all human beings.” See: Otis Redding, “Respect,” *The Very Best of Otis Redding*, Atlantic Recording Corp., 1992; Aretha Franklin and David Ritz, *Aretha: From These Roots* (New York: Villiard Books, 1999), 112, Accessed from: [<http://solomon.bltc.alexanderstreet.com/cgi-bin/asp/philo/bltc/getvolume.pl?S7948#DIV20>] on 1 August 2012. Also, consider Gus Van Sant’s 1998 cinematic shot-for-shot “remake” of Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, which, while mostly faithful in dialogue and image, added nuanced alterations to sound that shifted audience perceptions of certain characters. With the emergence and repetitive circulation of these texts, the notion of attributed authorship is questioned and, at times, redrawn. See: Keith Negus, “Authorship and the Popular Song,” *Music & Letters* 92 (4) (2011): 607-629; Shannon Donaldson-McHugh and Don Moore, “Film Adaptation, Co-Authorship, and Hauntology: Gus Van Sant’s *Psycho* (1998),” *Journal of Popular Culture* 39 (2) (2006): 225-233.

content, and through the public iteration of texts, the constitutive meaning of discourse is reinforced or reconstituted in repeated practice.

Extensional constitutive rhetoric invites scholars to consider texts through a life metaphor. Such a comparison is inviting, John McDermott has argued, because “of the preeminence of the experience of nature as open and as subject to reconstruction,” including “notions of growth, experiment, liberty, and amelioration” that color dominant threads of American thought.<sup>28</sup> Applying this metaphor to public address studies, Robert Itlis and Stephen Browne provide readers with a sense of how rhetorical texts exist on two planes separated by an author’s intention: The first life is fleeting and restricted to “a historical moment,” which, once passed, ushers the text into a longer and more diffuse existence at the hands of “a secondary auditor” and “fresh encounter.”<sup>29</sup> Several theorists and contributors have utilized the life to describe its proximity to or separation from authorial intentions. Michel Foucault saw texts as “objects of appropriation” best understood as acts rather than a products, meant to be studied on a situational mode of existence.<sup>30</sup> Roland Barthes, in a similar respect, defined the text as a seemingly infinite object of study, or “a methodological field” and an “*activity of production*,” distinguished from the “fragment of substance,” such as the physical object of a book

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<sup>28</sup> John J. McDermott, *The Culture of Experience: Philosophical Essays in the American Grain* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 9.

<sup>29</sup> Robert S. Itlis and Stephen H. Browne, “Tradition and Resurgence in Public Address Studies” in Gerald M. Phillips and Julia T. Tood (eds), *Speech Communication: Essays to Commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Speech Communication Association* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 89.

<sup>30</sup> These modes might include “circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation” within the varying practices of a given culture. See: Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” in José V. Harari (ed), *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca, New York, 1979), 148 and 158.



that defines a “work.”<sup>31</sup> James W. Chesebro, finally, expanded Barthes position, defining a *work* as a physical fragment and a *text* as “any kind of response to or experience derived from the work”: “any kind of textual analysis, such as a performance or critical assessment” that “functions independently of the original work, ultimately displacing the original work.”<sup>32</sup>

If the oralizing of the text in later performances represents a reconstitution of the original discourse, what implication does this bring to the relationship between authors and audiences? Michael Calvin McGee proposed critics read texts as “larger than the apparently finished discourse that presents itself as transparent,” and, even more, that it was consumers, not authors, who were the contemporary “*producers of discourse*.”<sup>33</sup> Michael Leff’s project on close reading, by contrast, emphasized a text’s wholeness as an artistic design whereby critic “move from what is given in the text to something that they themselves produce—an account of the rhetorical dynamics implicit within it.”<sup>34</sup> The position of a text also resided, Leff later clarified, as “at once a point of local closure, an event in the ongoing development of a genre of utterance, and a productive moment in the unending process of interpreting and re-interpreting the social world.”<sup>35</sup> This calibration makes a special contribution to our understanding of ceremonial repetition and the tension between authorial intention and public reception of texts.

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<sup>31</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 156-157.

<sup>32</sup> James W. Chesebro, “Text, Narration, and Media,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 9 (1989): 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture,” *Western Communication Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (Summer 1990): 279 and 288.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Leff, “Textual Criticism: The Legacy of Gerald Morhmann,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 378.

<sup>35</sup> Leff, “Lincoln Among the Nineteenth-Century Orators,” 134.

How can a rhetorical critic account for a text repeated? Do texts coalesce as fragments of public consciousness collected by the critic, as performances that replace original works they invoke, or as wholesale artifacts consistent with an author's design? For clarity, I suggest we maintain the helpful distinction between the lives of public address and also return to the situational definition of a text nestled in etymology of the Latin word *textus*—a weaving or organized body of work that “designates a texture or network of relations interwoven with the problem of language.”<sup>36</sup> Analysis of ceremonial repetition invites critics to scrutinize the shape and form of a text repeated within the context of reappraisal and public presentation. Through its reappearance, the text engages with a broader weaving, and takes shape by way of its interaction with contextual components in a new setting: a fusion of intended and inherited meaning.<sup>37</sup> The perceived constancy of content gives way to functionality of form in ascribing meaning. In an apt illustration, Burke noted the significance of a scene in this regard: “A ringing bell is in itself as meaningless as an undifferentiated portion of the air we are breathing. It takes on character, meaning, significance (dinner bell or door bell) in accordance with the contexts in which we experience it.”<sup>38</sup> The intentions of the author are not extinguished in the later performances or invocations of a text, as Chesboro has argued. Instead, Jasinski argues, an “audience’s actions in this case actualize the

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<sup>36</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, and Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 19; This definition is also found in *The Bantam New College Latin & English Dictionary, Third Edition* [John C. Traupman] (New York: Bantam Dell, [1966] 2007), 421 and 679.

<sup>37</sup> LaCapra defines texts as “events in the history of language,” and further argues, “One of the most important contexts for reading texts is clearly our own—a context that is misconstrued when it is seen in narrowly ‘presentist’ terms.” See LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History*, 65.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose, Third Edition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 7.

constitutive potential of the text, thereby generating extensional force, without the necessarily sharing in the intentions of the author or speaker.”<sup>39</sup> The extensional “historiography” or trajectory of a text in the hands of an audience does not dispense with the functional perspective of language completely, but rather “attempts to fold the instrumental moment of discursive action into the larger process of social and cultural (re)constitution.”<sup>40</sup> Relationships between authors and audiences are maintained, in part, by the act of reading, or the attention recurring form inscribes in ceremonial repetition.

In summary, tracing the path from first to second life of public address requires consideration of both authorial craft and public interpretation. As Jasinski and Mercieca’s analysis of extensional constitutive rhetoric posits, accounting for a text’s legacy isn’t possible without including critical intentional analysis as well. We cannot tell what has been produced from a reading, in short, without considering what an audience or reader has either maintained or reconstituted in the act of recitation. Readers can define the influence of authorial intention by way of their attention to and display of the text. The sense of wholeness in which texts re-appear in commemoration signals an appropriation of an author’s words, and critics of ceremonial repetition should account for this connection, even if it is reduced to answering how a performance reconstitutes the original language within or beyond the intentions of the author.

An exploration of constitutive rhetoric and various conceptions defining the text provides important insight to conducting rhetorical criticism of ceremonial repetition. As critics approach this phenomenon, they must recalibrate the traditional relationship

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<sup>39</sup> Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography,” 78.

<sup>40</sup> Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography,” 91.

between speakers and audiences. Ceremonial repetition means the actions of the audience—replaying the words of others—become the dominant signals influencing how texts are reimagined in ways that are congruent or radically altered from an original authorial design. This insight, however, is only the beginning. In the words of Gilles Deleuze, “[r]epetition *changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it.*”<sup>41</sup> While repeating a speech does not inherently alter its substantive qualities, we must also know more about how an audience rhetorically alters presumptions of a text beyond its base denotative meaning. If we maintain the traditional terminology of the text, we must also account for other threads that are woven into its design and meant draw relational implications from its new life.

Observing a text in repeated form invites another insight from Burke’s theory of human language: “associational clusters.”<sup>42</sup> For Burke, human messages include a set of “implicit equations” that reveal how particular concepts are defined through “what kind of acts and images and personalities and situations go with” other major ideas within author’s disposition of a text.<sup>43</sup> Though Burke’s original conceptions of

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<sup>41</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 70 (*emphasis in original*).

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action, Third Edition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1973), 20.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* Burke’s theory of “symbolic mergers” has produced a popular method of rhetorical analysis commonly referred to as cluster criticism. One major premise of this method is that an author’s “*true subject*” cannot be hidden if critics follow the disposition of words and ideas as they appear through either quantitative frequency or qualitative impact within the text. Though I do not follow the formula of cluster criticism wholesale in the case studies that follow, I am clearly appropriating the substantive presumption that the repetition of a text invites a new public appraisal of its meaning, which is evident by virtue of its associative symbolism and “implicit equations.” For an elaborated view of clusters and cluster criticism, see: Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History, Third Edition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), especially 232-234 and 328-329; William Rueckert, *Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations, Second Edition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 86-90; Joseph Schwartz, “Kenneth Burke, Aristotle, and the Future of Rhetoric,” *College Composition and Communication* 17 (1966): 210-216; Carol A. Berthold, “Kenneth Burke’s Cluster-

associational clusters derived from his analysis of lyric poetry, the public appropriation of rhetorical texts in ceremonial repetition invites a similar insight with regard to the epideictic context wherein a speech is reimagined. In the following section, I push beyond the helpful framework of extensional constitutive rhetoric to explain how the multifaceted genre of epideictic speech adds further insight into how components of ceremonial repetition interact with one another. Repetition alone creates the *potential* for change. Strategies to remember the text and strategically bring the discourse before the eyes—literally and figuratively—illustrate the dominant threads of repetition by which critics can account for the imbrication of the text repeated and its new emergence from an audience’s “constitutive energy.”<sup>44</sup>

#### MEMORY AND SIGHT: REPETITION AND THE EPIDEICTIC GENRE

Speech genres mold the relational perceptions of speakers and audiences. In Aristotle’s original formulation of rhetorical genres, epideictic speech was distinguished from its forensic or deliberative counterparts by positioning audience members as spectators and observers rather than critical evaluators. Epideictic occasions profile a speaker’s ability to amplify relevant virtues of the occasion, whether the claims established in speech be praise or blame.<sup>45</sup> Perelman and Olrechts-Tytecha echo this observation, attributing the genre to communal education and the “strengthening the adherence to what is already accepted.”<sup>46</sup> Celeste Condit outlines the function of

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Agon Method: Its Development and an Application,” *Central States Speech Journal* 27 (1976): 302-309; Michael Hassett, “Sophisticated Burke: Kenneth Burke as a Neosophistic Rhetorician,” *Rhetoric Review* 13 (Spring 1995): 371-390.

<sup>44</sup> Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography,” 75.

<sup>45</sup> Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 48-49 and 174.

epideictic speech as establishing communal knowledge and moments of shared reflection. Eulogies, tributes, and apologies allow speakers to engage audiences on a variety of levels: “understanding and definition,” sharing and creation of community, and entertainment and display.”<sup>47</sup> The “sharing of community” is both understood and displayed: epideictic occasions allow audiences to “share, live, and display their community.”<sup>48</sup> Chief among the integral components of the epideictic encounter is the focus on communal virtues, the use of cultural memory to organize the meaning of such occasions, and the role of display in collective observance.

Epideictic rhetoric is not based on argumentative appeals in the same manner as legal or political rhetoric, yet the purpose of such discourse is equally selective and strategic. As Gerald Hauser has written, epideictic occasions are opportunities to translate a sense of communal virtue for a shared reflection. Using the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* as his guide, Hauser posited that such occasions proceed by “celebrating the deeds of exemplars that set the tone for civic community and the encomiast serves an equally unique role as teacher of civic virtue.”<sup>49</sup> Virtues, Alasdair MacIntyre argued, represent “*an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the*

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<sup>46</sup> Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, 52.

<sup>47</sup> Celeste Michelle Condit, “The Functions of Epideictic,” 284.

<sup>48</sup> Celeste Michelle Condit, “The Functions of Epideictic,” 296 and 292; Dale E. Sullivan echoes this sentiment, observing that Ceremonies should “bring people fully into the same tradition of which he or she is representative.” See: Dale E. Sullivan, “The Ethos of Epideictic Encounter” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 26 (1993): 117.

<sup>49</sup> Gerard Hauser, “Aristotle on Epideictic: The Formation of Public Morality” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29, number 1 (Winter 1999): 9.

*lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.*”<sup>50</sup> Within the epideictic framework, *mimesis* is once again central to civic education. “If the poet makes a mark through discourse mimetic of life,” Hauser observed, “the encomiast makes one encouraging a life mimetic of public morality constituted through discourse.”<sup>51</sup> Epideictic rhetoric encourages the tenets of public virtue worthy of emulation by the audience that would otherwise be left unstated. Under Hauser’s conception of epideictic discourse, ceremonial repetition is a phenomenon of *mimesis* attempting to be doubly applied. First, the act of ceremonial rhetoric should provide a model worthy of imitation. Second, if the model for emulation is conveyed *through* imitation, or the repetition of public discourse, communities would ideally need to somehow translate such a rhetorical act in order to understand the fresh iteration with the appropriate sense of praise and blame to organized and reify communal relations.

As Lawrence Rosenfield elaborates, the moment of ceremonial reflection “instills the meaning of what *is* in the collective memory and so commemorates a person or event.”<sup>52</sup> Remembering together is a mode of public witnessing: an epideictic moment “envelop its participants in reminders of excellence” and “rescue it in memory.”<sup>53</sup> By

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<sup>50</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Moral Theory, Third Edition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 191. In defining virtues, we should also remember Aristotle’s well-versed observation that “with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the virtues. And it is plain that, even if it were of no practical value, we should have needed it because it is the virtue of the part of us in question; plain too that the choice will not be right without practical wisdom any more than without virtue; for the one determines the end and the other makes us do the things that lead to the end.” Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Modern Library, 1992), 470-171.

<sup>51</sup> Hauser, “Aristotle on Epideictic,” 15.

<sup>52</sup> Lawrence Rosenfield, “The Practical Celebration of Epideictic,” in *Rhetoric in Transition: Studies in the Nature and Uses of Rhetoric*, ed. Eugene E. White (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), 135.

positioning the text as the central mode of understanding public virtue, the repetition of past words are substituted for the encomiasts' appeal: the text repeated is an argument of public virtue and communal focus, while the display—the mode of conveying the act of repetition—should ideally focus or constrain an understanding of the text that replenishes a sense of public virtue. Epideictic occasions that define public virtue would necessarily rely on a level of shared understanding between speaker and audience, giving ceremonial repetition a unique constraint of public understanding: for a virtue to be publicly emulated requires a sense of common comprehension of the text, or a mutual understanding as to what behaviors and actions such words repeated mean in a present moment. This expectation seems to be an incredible weight for mere words repeated across time. Appropriators of discourse are not without their own arsenal of rhetorical strategies to convey such meaning, however. As several scholars have attested, the precise texture of epideictic rhetoric is conveyed in a sense of shared memory and communal vision. As I argue in the paragraphs below, these same components are equally essential to analyzing the public virtue embedded in a text repeated.

Public memory represents a subjective and selective relationship with the past, and the ideal fabric from which a shared identity is forged.<sup>54</sup> Memory's function is

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<sup>53</sup> Rosenfield, "The Practical Celebration of Epideictic," 135.

<sup>54</sup> The divide between history and memory is detailed at length in Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harber and Row, 1980), especially 50-87. For observations of memory generally, see: Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1966; *Aristotle On Memory, Second Edition*, ed, Richard Sorabji (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2007; Saint Augustine [trans. Henry Chadwick], *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2008, especially 179-220; Herni Bergson [trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer], *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books), 1991; Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture, Second Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2008; Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring, 1989): 7-24; Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1987; Paul Connerton, *How Societies*



evident, Barbie Zelizer elaborates, in the “constitution and reconstitution of social groups,” which, by remembering together shapes perceptions of “belonging, exclusivity, social order, and community.”<sup>55</sup> Any conception of identity, John Gillis echoes, “depends on the idea of memory, and vice versa.”<sup>56</sup> More than a story of self-constitution, W. James Booth adds, memory is both a shared evaluation and a shared story: it is “a unifying ingathering of experiences that are decisive in some way or other for an individual or a community, for its sense of justice and its identity.”<sup>57</sup> Such habits and evaluations of memory emerge, furthermore, from social frameworks. For Maurice Halbwachs and other scholars of public memory, group identity provides the deliberate shape and texture of re-imagining the past according to present circumstances. “The past does not recur,” Halbwachs argued, “...but is reconstructed on the basis of the

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*Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1989; Paul Ricoeur [trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer], *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2004; for an elaborated thesis on public memory as a reflection of power struggles between elite and vernacular interests, see: John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1992; For an alternate view of Bodnar’s thesis, see: Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2000; Kathleen J. Turner, ed, *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press), 1998; John R. Gillis, ed, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1994; Kendall R. Phillips, ed, *Framing Public Memory* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press), 2004; Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (State College, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press), 2010; W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 2006; For discussions of monuments and memory see: James Young: *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1993; Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, Brian L. Ott, eds, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press), 2010; Anne Teresa Demo and Bradford Vivian, eds, *Rhetoric, Remembrance, and Visual Form: Sighting Memory* (New York: Routledge), 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Barbie Zelizer, “Reading the Past Against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* (1995): 216.

<sup>56</sup> Gillis, “Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship,” in Gillis (ed) *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

<sup>57</sup> W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 93.

present.”<sup>58</sup> With the exception of dreams, Halbwachs elaborated, individuals remember “as group members” reflecting together.<sup>59</sup> The past is imagined within social frameworks. Though individuals may remember the past within a singular consciousness, the same individuals, Halbwachs continues, derive thoughts and recollections “that come to us from the social milieu.”<sup>60</sup> As Booth reiterates this point, the individual and the group are intertwined: “the memory of one’s own past is the recollection of one’s place in a family, a profession, a community of faith, or a political community, and it is shaped by the surrounding group.”<sup>61</sup>

Categorizing the recitation of a text as epideictic speech expands our sense of public discourse as public memory. However, we are still less certain as to how collective frameworks might imbue a text with particular qualities or forms of remembering beyond its verbal performance. To answer this question, we must consider a second dimension of public memory relative to ceremonial repetition: speech as common object of commemoration. Memory thrives in a shared space when “people meet and interact in a single scene of interaction,” Edward Casey writes, further arguing that memory acts to “gathe[r] place, people, and topics in its encompassing embrace,” creating an “external horizon that encircles the situation ... the place we are always at when we are not merely standing by others or with family and friends.”<sup>62</sup> In addition to a shared space of remembrance, Casey writes, communities remember with common

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<sup>58</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 39-40.

<sup>59</sup> Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 48.

<sup>60</sup> Maurice Halbwachs [trans. Lewis A. Coser], *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 53.

<sup>61</sup> Booth, *Communities of Memory*, 48.

<sup>62</sup> Edward Casey, “Public Memory in Place and Time,” 32 and 37.

focus on a common object: “*Through* the appropriate *commemorabilia* I overcome the effects of anonymity and spatio-temporal distance and pay homage to people and events I have never known and will never know face-to-face.”<sup>63</sup> Bodies collected together, in other words, don’t remember without an appropriate channel or focus of commemoration. From a rhetorical standpoint, audiences “remember *through*” objects of commemoration and “participate *with*” such objects in honor of the person or idea of shared attention.<sup>64</sup> The common object of commemoration, Barbie Zelizer elaborates, is primarily language.<sup>65</sup> Our shared symbolic associations of words are undoubtedly the building blocks of a public sense of the past. Of the many forms public memory can take, however, Casey clarifies that “a public speech meant for the moment,” can become a memory when it is “preserved despite its author’s intentions.”<sup>66</sup> Ceremonial repetition complicates the study of commemoration and public memory in a profound way: instead of memory emerging *from* epideictic discourse, the text itself is the memory; instead of declamation as an exercise in personal education, the recitation is subject to altered conceptions of time and differing levels of interpretation within textual communities.

Speech as a *commemorabilia*, or the vehicle of shared remembrance, mirrors Émile Durkheim’s theory of “totemism.” When individuals share attention to objects in

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<sup>63</sup> Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: The University of Indiana Press, 1987), 218.

<sup>64</sup> Casey, *Remembering*, 247.

<sup>65</sup> Barbie Zelizer, 232; Stephen Browne echoes this point: “public memory lives as it is given expressive form; its analysis must therefore presume a theory of textuality and entail an appropriate mode of interpretation.” See: Stephen H. Browne, “Reading, Rhetoric, and the Texture of Public Memory,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 (1995), 248.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Casey, “Public Memory in Place and Time,” in Kendall R. Phillips (ed), *Framing Public Memory* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 18.

these moments, Durkheim suggested, there was “a force which they all partially share in, but which is nonetheless separate from them.”<sup>67</sup> This infusion of shared symbolic energy is representative of the collective body around which rituals occur: “The god of the clan,” Durkheim wrote, “can therefore be nothing else than the clan itself, but transfigured and imagined in the physical form of the plant or animal species that serve as totem.”<sup>68</sup> Durkheim and Casey’s respective work on the social implications of commemoration folds together the broader claim of Halbwachs’ proposition that a collective sense of memory “retains from the past only what still live or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping the memory alive.”<sup>69</sup>

Accounting for the public memory of public address may seem impossible within the confines of mere repetition. How much, after all, could repetition alter words to speak to the conditions and needs of an audience in the present moment? However, when repetition is read as a dominant thread within the texture of commemoration, critics can discern the suggested shape and relevance of discourse as memory by considering how the public language itself appeals to a suggested meaning for the recital. In other words, critics should consider the adjoining messages of repetition, and ask how these forms of communication invite a consistent or altered depiction of the text as memory. Kendall Phillips suggests critics may analyze the “publicness of memory,” or “the memorial dimensions enacted in our repeated practices, discourses and languages, our every cultural action being laden with cultural memories that give these

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<sup>67</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim, and Max Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 109.

<sup>68</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 154.

<sup>69</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harber and Row, 1980), 80.

actions their meaning and purpose.”<sup>70</sup> By examining external factors of the situation, such as “the mutative nature of repetition,” critics can draw out implications of speech repeated joined with messages framing the situational remembrance of discourse.<sup>71</sup> External factors around an episode of ceremonial repetition might include the discussions, speeches, and invocations of a text that give shape to its reading in the present moment. As Murray Edelman argued, “Political symbols bring out in concentrated form those particular meanings and emotions which the members of a group create and reinforce in each other.”<sup>72</sup> Specifically, Edelman elaborates, the “forms of expression or settings indicating the public or restricted character to which the language is addressed” represents one of the “observable responses” that political language can take on listeners.<sup>73</sup> Tracing the discourse around a ceremony, or the invocations of a text within the context of its repetition represents one way critics may analyze how a public text is made relevant to the present or illustrative of a civic virtue.

Equally important to the linguistic pairings of speech repeated, is the relationship between repetition and the visible display presented in political commemoration. As Francis Yates has demonstrated, classical treatises on memory frequently compared remembrance to the stamping “a signet ring makes on wax.”<sup>74</sup> More importantly, the

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<sup>70</sup> Kendall R. Phillips, “Introduction,” in *Framing Public Memory*, ed. Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 7.

<sup>71</sup> Phillips, “Introduction,” 9.

<sup>72</sup> Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 11.

<sup>73</sup> Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, 127.

<sup>74</sup> Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 36; Also see: Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 9; The author of *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* describes the usefulness of memory as a tool of delivering speeches in the following manner: “...whenever we wish to remember a point, by properly arranging the patterns of the backgrounds and carefully imprinting the images, we shall easily succeed in calling back to mind what

relationship between visibility and memory is rooted in the etymology of epideictic speech itself. Yun Lee Too's review is instructive: "The adjective *epideictic* comes from the Greek verb *epideiknumi*, which seems to have a nontechnical sense of 'to reveal or to tell,'" which, Too clarifies, is found in some legal rhetoric but "central to the aim of the genre of epideictic discourse."<sup>75</sup> The amplification of personal or public virtues was achieved through *descriptio*, the Latin term for *ekphrasis*, "meaning such a representation of an object that it appears to the imagination as if it were present and even alive."<sup>76</sup> Reimagining the words of others in a present moment means inevitably altering the shape and character of speech through public remembrance. To understand the prescribed public virtue and memory of a speech repeated, in other words, involves an analysis of visual messages. Rosenfield illustrates the relationship between commemoration and public vision explicitly, calling epideictic occasions the opportunity to "gaze at the aura glowing form within" a communal remembrance.<sup>77</sup> Thus, a second method of accounting for the public memory of rhetorical discourse enacted in ceremonial repetition is to focus on the text's display. Lawrence Prelli describes the richness of this inquiry more closely, arguing:

Whether constituted through vocal enunciation, textual inscription, visual portrayal, material structure, enacted performance, or some combination, rhetorical study of displays proceeds from the central idea that whatever they make manifest or appear is the culmination of selective processes that constrain the range of possible meanings available to those who encounter them.<sup>78</sup>

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we wish." See: [Cicero] [trans. Harry Caplan], *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 215.

<sup>75</sup> Yun Lee Too, "Epideictic Discourse," 251.

<sup>76</sup> Heinrich F. Plett, "Descriptio," in Thomas O. Sloane (ed), *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 221.

<sup>77</sup> Rosenfield, "The Practical Celebration of Epideictic," 146.

<sup>78</sup> Lawrence Prelli, "Rhetorics of Display," in Prelli (ed), *Rhetorics of Display* (Columbia: South Carolina University Press, 2006), 2.

Prelli's point highlights a recurring claim in this study thus far: the central object of ceremonial repetition is not *merely* the text repeated, but the sensory dimensions of the epideictic occasion that "constrain" the reading of the text and reveal both the memory work of such repetition, whether such rhetorical junctures occur through speech, image, or the design of remembrance that invites the audience to witness the world of the text.

Visual rhetoric bridges the concerns of epideictic discourse and repetition as public memorializing.<sup>79</sup> According to Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope, visual rhetoric "seeks and produces communities of viewers, spectators, witnesses, and participants through actions visualized in various forms."<sup>80</sup> Concern with visual messages conveyed through repetition invites analysis of how one complements and often complicates the other. As Bradford Vivian and Anne Teresa Demo argue, "images powerfully invoke memory, and that memory is profoundly informed by visual media, through rhetorical dynamics: visual and memorial forms coalesce according to the ways in which practices of interpretation, argumentation, or communication assign shared meaning to them."<sup>81</sup> This point echoes Prelli's argument that a likely outcome of

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<sup>79</sup> Important sources on the rhetorical possibilities of visual messages include: J. Anthony Blair, "The Possibility and Actuality of Visual Arguments," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 33 (Summer 1996): 23-39; Leo Groarke, "Logic Art and Argument," *Informal Logic* 18 (1996): 105-129; Lester C. Olson, "Intellectual and Conceptual Resources For Visual Rhetoric: A Re-examination of Scholarship Since 1950," *The Review of Communication* 7 (1) 2007): 1-20; Paul Messaris [Review Essay], "What's *Visual* About 'Visual Rhetoric'?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95 (2009): 210-223; Kevin Barnhurst, Michael Vari, and Igor Rodriguez, "Mapping Visual Studies in Communication," *Journal of Communication* 54 (2004): 616-644; Cara Finnegan, "Doing Rhetorical History of the Visual: The Photograph and the Archive," in *Defining Visual Rhetorics*, eds., Charles A. Hill and Marguerite H. Helmers (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2008), 195-213; Cara Finnegan and Jiyeon Kang, "'Sighting' the Public: Iconoclasm and Public Sphere Theory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (2004): 377-402.

<sup>80</sup> Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope, "Visual Rhetoric in Communication: Continuing Questions and Contemporary Issues," in *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture*, eds, Olson, Finnegan, and Hope (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008), 3.

<sup>81</sup> Bradford Vivian and Anne Teresa Demo, "Introduction," in Bradford Vivian and Anne Teresa Demo (eds), *Rhetoric, Remembrance, and Visual Form: Sighting Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 6.

delivering a speech—or, in our case, repeating a speech—is a comingling of text, image, and other features on an expansive rhetorical canvas: “Visual depictions rhetorically constrain our verbal responses, much as verbal depictions rhetorically constrain what we are prompted to see.”<sup>82</sup>

When ceremonial repetition makes the display of a speech text public, we are witnesses not only to a decorous detail within substantive communal remembrance, but also to a visual memorializing of public discourse itself. To draw the distinction another way, whereas Cara A. Finnegan once proposed rhetorical scholars take on “public address *about* the visual,”<sup>83</sup> ceremonial repetition is a rhetorical phenomenon asking critics to account for the ways publics visualize (or imagine) public address in public memory. When repetition conjoins with other messages within the moment of remembrance, the text is purposefully set into the public imagination with particular relations of symbolic associations revealing how it has been publicly remembered. The critic of ceremonial repetition begins by considering the relationship between words and images, and how symbolically constrains or impacts the other.

The relations between repetition and components of the epideictic occasion are not reducible to visible messages alone. Enacting or presenting a rhetorical vision of a text could hypothetically run a gamut between accompanying discourse, visual display, physical presence, or the written word. Once made public a speech repeated might interact with accompanying speeches, images, or even dynamics of the performers in

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<sup>82</sup> Prelli, “Rhetorics of Display,” 13.

<sup>83</sup> Cara A. Finnegan, “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8 (1) 2005: 35.



ways that narrow or direct the preferred memory of the text. In his important research on collective memory, Paul Connerton argues that memory must be performed to be sustained. Festivals often fall on familiar dates, and texts generate value as “repeatable utterances” in the sense that their “efficacy is in their uttered repetition.”<sup>84</sup> For Connerton, commemoration always includes a presentation of memory that is both repeated and performed to an audience.

There is a certain type of repetition which we are familiar with when a film or recorded music or a work of literature is perceived by us for the second time or several times. The repetition of such works, which do not require within the work itself the mediation of interpreters, is in an important way analogous to the repetition of words, for instance in their theatrical performances, where the mediation of such interpreters is required; for just as the repeated performance of the same play by different actors at different times accentuates the specific nature of each performance and brings to our attention the differences between these performances, so also, even if in a qualitatively different way, the ‘repeated’ perception of the same text or recorded disc or film discloses the development of the perceiver’s consciousness and brings to our attention the differences in each reading.<sup>85</sup>

Connerton and Prelli’s respective observations of the sight and performance of memory give additional momentum to viewing moments of ceremonial repetition as opportunities to transfer meaning in performance. Memory, Edward Casey adds, can also take form in bodily performance, a facet of memory usually attributed to unconscious habit. “In such memory,” Casey writes, “the past is *embodied* in actions. Rather than being contained separately somewhere in mind or brain, it is actively ingredient in the very bodily movements that accomplish a particular action.”<sup>86</sup>

Publics have multiple ways in which to negotiate a relationship with discourse as memory. As this brief summary has illustrated, by framing ceremonial repetition within the constraints and opportunities of epideictic rhetoric, we are better positioned to

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<sup>84</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 67.

<sup>85</sup> Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 67.

<sup>86</sup> Edward Casey, *Remembering*, 149.

investigate how a particular meaning of a text is implied in the act of breaking the bonds of the past and making a new vision of the text in the present. We may push the nature of our inquiry beyond questions of perceived sameness or difference in repetition and ask the more compelling rhetorical questions: How has this community remembered the text? What image of the text is remembered, and what does such a display tell us about the capacity of such practices to alter or maintain communal identity? How do the interactions of what is seen and what is heard invite listeners to “see” a sense of common public virtue?

Whether by word, image, or performance, ceremonial repetition impels us to consider discourse repeated within the larger weaving of messages that nurture public memory through acts of repetition. Indeed, the choices publics make in giving life to a text repeated are crucial to the effectiveness of such commemoration. As the case studies that comprise this study illustrate, different forms of repeating lend themselves to a range of investigations—sometimes the public address accompanying repetition, sometimes the visual display, and other times the bodily enactment that imply something about *this* iteration of a text’s life and its meaning to a community of listeners. In the final section of this interpretive summary, I elaborate on the implications of public remembrance through repetition, and the range of possibilities that emerge from repetition for the constitution of political identities.

#### TEXTUAL COMMUNITIES AND THE THICKNESS OF MEMORY

The texts at the center of ceremonial repetition exist as durable and enduring artifacts of public interest. Their form and display becomes a multidimensional way of

understanding how repetition can nurture a sense of identity and involvement in public affairs. In their study on iconic photographs, Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites note that the mass circulation and extension of resonant images plays an important role in negotiating the relationship between the witnessing public and the formulation of political culture. Such photos, the authors elaborate, tell a history through their use, including citizens' efforts to "negotiate self-understanding" within a political culture, and "work out public opinion and personal attitudes about specific political actors, policies, and practices."<sup>87</sup> In a similar regard, an analytical treatment of ceremonial repetition begs the question of not only how publics utilized speech as memory, but how, once introduced, texts can also constitute a sense of public identity in their display.

The relationship between texts and publics has been the source of multiple interpretations. Michael Warner's influential work *Publics and Counterpublics* posits that communities are recognized as such only by virtue of the texts that bind them together. Discourse, in short, is an accessible way to "offer its members direct and active membership through language, to place strangers on shared footing."<sup>88</sup> Not just words alone, but the act of reading itself can bring into being a communal sensibility. For Brian Stock, this relation is evident in what he terms "textual communities," or "microsocieties organized around the common understanding of a script."<sup>89</sup> His description warrants elaboration:

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<sup>87</sup> Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 38.

<sup>88</sup> Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 108.

<sup>89</sup> Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 23.

Wherever there are texts that are read aloud or silently, there are groups of listeners that can potentially profit from them. A natural process of education takes place within this group, and, if the force of the word is strong enough, it can supersede the differing economic and social backgrounds of the participants, welding them, for a time at least, into a unit. In other words, the people who enter the group are not precisely the same as those who come out. Something has happened, and this experience affects their relations both with other members and with those in the outside world. Among the members, solidarity prevails, with the outside, separation. The members may disperse, but they can also institutionalize their new relations, for instance, by forming a religious order or a sectarian movement that meets on regular occasion. If they take this course, the community acquires the ability to perpetuate itself. An aspect of the social lives of the group's members will from that moment be determined by the rules of membership in the community.<sup>90</sup>

Stock's "textual communities" do not require an original interpretation of the text, but instead emerge from within the moment of collective attention to the text. In a similar vein, Stanley Fish has claimed that meanings attributed to texts emerge not from acts of reading, but are "the shape of reading," suggesting communal frameworks "give texts their shape, making them rather than as is usually assumed, arising from them."<sup>91</sup>

Whether texts arise from public interpretations inherent in reading, or publics originate from texts (akin to Benedict Anderson's claim that national identity is imbued from "the style" in which communities are "imagined"<sup>92</sup>), the epideictic form of ceremonial repetition constitutes and contributes to the perceived ideological commitments of a political community. While constitutive of public identity, ceremonial repetition invites others to observe and participate in political perceptions of the world as well. In his study on the communal memory of Abraham Lincoln and the allegation the sixteenth president was gay, Charles Morris III explored the "symbolic contest for the communal meaning of historic identity" between dueling factions of the

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<sup>90</sup> Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text*, 150.

<sup>91</sup> Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1980), 13.

<sup>92</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

debate, and the reactionary vitriol displayed from historians and local Springfield residents.<sup>93</sup> Memory, Morris concluded, is a constitutive activity: “to constitute Lincoln’s memory is to be constituted by Lincoln’s memory.”<sup>94</sup>

Presuming the display of texts constitutes a sense of political identity, Bradford Vivian has suggested critics also evaluate the public memory by considering “The quality of the social relationship established or sustained through [memory’s] expression.”<sup>95</sup> His criticism of public recitations for the one-year anniversary of 9/11 in 2002—which featured sampled well-known political texts such as Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” Address, the Preamble of the Constitution, the opening of the Declaration of Independence, and the Gettysburg Address—help provide understanding for repetition as both a reflection of interpretive strategies as well as operative discourse sustaining of political relationships. By Vivian’s account, the 9/11/2002 commemorations featuring recitals of various political texts failed. “For commemorative purposes,” Vivian noted, “the very ritual or symbolic action of *reciting* traditional texts is often more essential to maintaining the continuity of collective memory than conjuring new turns of phrase.”<sup>96</sup> In the midst of remembering tragedy, the recital of texts outside their literal meaning or political alignments was designed by organizers to “unify heterogeneous audiences in a public display of mourning that would transcend intervening social, political, or economic divisions,” while, by way of the indirect and non-confrontational form, “not

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<sup>93</sup> Charles Morris III, “My Old Kentucky Homo: Lincoln and the Politics of Queer Memory,” *Framing Public Memory*, ed. Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: Alabama University Press, 2004), 90-92.

<sup>94</sup> Morris III, “My Old Kentucky Homo,” 99.

<sup>95</sup> Bradford Vivian, “‘A Timeless Now’: Memory and Repetition,” in *Framing Public Memory*, ed. Kendal R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 205.

<sup>96</sup> Bradford Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic: Rhetorical Form and Commemorative Politics on September 11th, 2002,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (February 2006), 5.

summon citizens for public advocacy in the presence of others, but excus[e] them from the preoccupations of private life.”<sup>97</sup> Citizens, in short, were not asked to respond, partake, or ponder meaning, but were instead positioned in the midst of shallow incantations. Epideictic situations need not always be wholly original, Vivian suggests, but should nevertheless be evaluated on whether an act has worked toward “replenishing the political resources of civic remembrance.”<sup>98</sup>

The bridge between texts as constitutive of publics and publics as interpretive communities of texts emerges, Jasinski notes, through an analysis of textual historiography. Again, he argues that the extensional constitution of a text is inherent between two worlds—that of the text and that of its continued circulation—and presents four potential points of analysis: “self-constitution and the formation of subjectivity or subject positions”; the organization or structure of “an individual’s or culture’s experience of time and space”; “norms of political culture and experience of communal existence (including collective identity)”; and “the linguistic resources of the culture (including, in particular, the stock of fundamental political concepts that shape the culture’s understanding of political existence).”<sup>99</sup> In addition to the extensional and epideictic components of reading, critics analyzing moments of repetition must account for the cultural presumptions implicit in the performance of ceremonial repetition, as

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<sup>97</sup> Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic,” 15-16.

<sup>98</sup> Near the end of his analysis of the 2002 commemoration of 9/11, Vivian clarifies that his conclusions do not eliminate the possibility of constructive mimesis, so long as such a formula were “constructively employed” to the audience in question. See Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic,” 19 and 21.

<sup>99</sup> Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography,” 75.

well as the invitations such repetition offers to observers to be part of the world the reading implies.<sup>100</sup>

Critics should, moreover, be able to analyze both the extensional life of public address constituted through reading, as well as inferences that reflect the presence or absence of an interpretive community at work. Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive overview of the major public philosophies in the United States, two perspectives of political theory—liberalism and communitarianism—provide an orientation to self-constitution that illustrates the question of subjectivity in the context ceremonial repetition.

Liberalism is and remains, in the words of Robert Bellah et al., the “first language” of public life, and built on an individualistic belief in “personal effort” and a “sink-or-swim” approach to mutual success.<sup>101</sup> Liberalism centers on individual liberty, and by implication, stresses that the government should not interfere with the moral ends of public life. Instead, a neutral framework of universal fairness presides and the “fair procedures over particular ends,” in the words of Michael Sandel.<sup>102</sup> The cause of liberal fairness, John Rawls claimed, necessitates that the individual take on the “original position” and the “veil of ignorance.” Rawls’ premise was that society requires a certain

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<sup>100</sup> James Boyd White observes this dualistic implication when he writes, “For while a person acts both with and upon the language that he uses, at once employing and reconstituting its resources, his language at the same time acts upon him.” *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 8.

<sup>101</sup> Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1996), viii.

<sup>102</sup> Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4.

*thinness* of individuals on matters of political importance in order to achieve a fair conception of justice. He elaborates:

The reasons the original position must abstract from and not be affected by the contingencies of the social world is that the conditions for a fair agreement on the principles of political justice between free and equal persons must eliminate the bargaining advantages that inevitably arise within the background institutions of any society from cumulative social, historical, and natural tendencies. These contingent advantages and accidental influences from the past should not affect an agreement on the principles that are to regulate the institutions of the basic structure itself from the present into the future.<sup>103</sup>

Suggestions that an individual's perception on issues like religion or other political viewpoints can be contemplated "independent of life's contingencies," remains, in Sandel's view, untenable.<sup>104</sup> By thinning the theory of the self, Sandel writes, the Rawlsian approach to political liberalism lessens the extent to which personal values, commitments, and activities constitute the very being of the self: "a sense of community describes a possible aim of antecedently individuated selves, not an ingredient or constituent of their identity as such."<sup>105</sup>

In contrast to political liberalism, the communitarian or civic republican political philosophy positions individuals as part of a collective consciousness that shift and shape through the involvement in communal activities. Republican political theory, Sandel adds, is built upon "a knowledge of public affairs and also a sense of belonging, a concern for the whole, a moral bond with the community whose fate is at stake."<sup>106</sup> Being an individual in the philosophy of civic republicanism, "does not entail escaping our ties to others," Bellah et al. note, clarifying, "real freedom lies not in rejecting our

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<sup>103</sup> John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 23.

<sup>104</sup> Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 13.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 64.

<sup>106</sup> Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontents*, 5.



social nature but in fulfilling it in a critical and adult loyalty” with special regard to responsibility and a shared effort.<sup>107</sup> Insofar as political philosophies are implied through public practice, our perceptions of individualism and communal identity is shifting with each public and political expression of a text repeated.<sup>108</sup>

Living between “the empty self and the constituted self,” Bellah et al. suggest, is the price of clinging to either a thin or thickened view of political consensus and collective attachment.<sup>109</sup> At the risk of walking through tall theoretical grass, we can position both the thin and thick recognition of the self within the epideictic actions of ceremonial repetition and the rhetorical commitments displayed therein. As texts are repeated as communal memory and reconstituted through their display and re-imagination, public positions relative to a text are also being refashioned through practice. Philippe-Josepha Salazar refers to such subjectivity in discourse as “*plasma*,” or the “kind of fiction that gives both audience and orator a sense of communality, of awareness of the world,” representing “a scenario for reality.”<sup>110</sup> The necessary question remains how ceremonial repetition promotes an invitation of public involvement within a textual community for listening and observing audiences.

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<sup>107</sup> Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*, x.

<sup>108</sup> Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, 4.

<sup>109</sup> Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*, 254; Not all political theorists accept a dichotomy between communitarianism or republicanism and individualism or liberalism. Richard Dagger, for instance, has appealed for “republican liberalism,” or an ethic that “strengthens the appeal of duty, community, and the common good while preserving the appeal of rights.” See Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5.

<sup>110</sup> Philippe-Joseph Salazar, *An African Athens: Rhetoric and the Shaping of Democracy in South Africa* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002), 26.

## CONCLUSION

As I've argued in this summary of relevant literature, the plague of permanence that led to Zora's downfall in Calvino's poem is clearly not our own. Repetition is a flexible, malleable, and persuasive activity subject to a diverse range of textual relations organized by human hands and meant to invite a sense of communal identity, virtue, and memory. Using interpretive frameworks from constitutive rhetorical theory, the epideictic genre of speech, and a broad sense of American political philosophy, I have proposed a number of ways to account for the "life of reading" that will be relevant in the case studies of ceremonial repetition that follow. The traditional functions of epideictic speech—amplification and display of civic virtue—meet in an interactive space during repetition wherein speech as memory is influenced by a commemorative context of messages, including public address, visual rhetoric, and dimensions of performance, that become part of the situational weaving giving shape to the reading within a present moment. Audiences both extend the public and political legacy of a text, and are, in turn, shaped by its public form. Finally, I have outlined the degree to which imagining the words of others defines and reconstitutes public relations to both the memory of a text and one another.

Our primary object of criticism in this study is the second life of public address. Yet, this life takes on multiple forms—speech, image, performance—that are inconsistently accounted for or implemented in particular contexts. Not all moments of ceremonial repetition are created equally. Nor do instances of such repetition call on a uniform means of interpreting commemoration. Possibilities of productive repetition

exist through the form in which a text repeated is made public, and each episode of ceremonial repetition in the chapters that follow will be addressed on its own terms. As we transition to our first case study of analysis, we will better understand how the life of reading emerges when a text is repeated in a new context and joined within a set of shared messages nurturing its commemoration.

### CHAPTER III

## FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AUGUST FIRST, AND THE MEMORY OF THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

*Expansion is the essential quality of an idea.*  
—Frederick Douglass, Medina, New York, 3 August 1869.

### INTRODUCTION

Revisiting an artifact of public discourse is a chance to forge a new relationship with the dead and their words. The mode of expressing such words largely determines how this new relationship will be interpreted within a new scene. As Walter Ong has suggested, the form of language—speech or print—invites a different response from a listening audience. When language travels through the sound of a voice rather than the silence of print, he claimed, words “merge with a total situation to convey meaning.”<sup>1</sup> Untethered from the confines of the page, a written text may be verbalized, inviting a new situational weaving amid other messages that affirm or altering its original character. This analysis suggests one way of understanding the public memory imbued in ceremonial repetition is the linguistic juxtaposition between a text repeated and its rhetorical counterpart in shared remembrance. Or, in Lawrence Prelli’s summary, a memory of discourse emerges from the repetition of a text and rhetorical discourse that “shape[s] what we imagine or actually see.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), 116.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Prelli, “Rhetorics of Display,” in Prelli (ed), *Rhetorics of Display* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 13.

In order to explain what Ong termed a “total situation” wherein a verbalized text emerges within the public imagination, I explore three keynote speeches by Frederick Douglass delivered at August First celebrations. These speeches are important because they provide insight as to how a key text of American public discourse—the Emancipation Proclamation—was remembered in the decades after its issuance during the late nineteenth-century. More specifically, however, these occasions were opportunities to commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation in repetition, and reformulate the relationship between past and present, as well as community and text. When paired together, how did Douglass’s oratory and recitation of the Emancipation Proclamation offer a new vision of the text? By analyzing these ceremonial speeches, I argue that Frederick Douglass’s primary strategy of framing texts as entities in progress contributed to the extensional life of the Emancipation Proclamation, and, with varying effect, repositioned the text’s relevancy and relationship to his immediate audience.

Commemorations of emancipation are as complex and varied as the textual artifacts credited with the expansion of American freedom. Disagreements on the appropriate time, place, or object of remembrance created a swirl of calendar dates and rhetorical contexts, as evidenced in Douglass’s habit of speaking to multiple audiences and different occasions celebrating African American freedom.<sup>3</sup> His keynote speeches celebrating British West Indian emancipation, however, represent some of the most

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<sup>3</sup> See Douglass’s orations commemorating the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia: “Our Destiny is Largely in Our Own Hands: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 16 April 1883”; “In Law Free; In Fact, a Slave: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 16 April 1888”; “The Nation’s Problem: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 16 April 1889,” all in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, Volume 5: 1881-1895*, eds. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 59-80; 357-373; 403-426.

confrontational and direct appeals to frame the public memory of the Emancipation Proclamation in the context of American liberty. Indeed, celebrations of British West Indian emancipation not only persisted in the decades following the Civil War, but also took on an added importance by interrogating the promise of freedom in an age of declining liberty for African Americans. Douglass's keynote speeches illustrate a key set of arguments by which audiences were invited to reimagine the 1863 document within these moments of repetition. As I argue in the pages that follow, this context produced a remarkable pairing: the invocation of the Emancipation Proclamation—a text without a clear point of closure—and the public philosophy of Frederick Douglass—a speaker who eloquently evaluated legal decrees through tangible outcomes of performed action.

The remainder of this essay unfolds in the following manner. First, I provide readers with an overview of the text in question. Widely praised by abolitionists upon its original issuance, the Emancipation Proclamation remains an enduring artifact that carries the burdens of being commonly associated with African American freedom and also critiqued for its minimal impact and legalistic prose. As I demonstrate in later sections, the richness of Lincoln's decree has originated from textual association, not internal eloquence. Second, I provide an overview of the Emancipation Proclamation within the norms and practices of August First celebrations throughout the nineteenth-century. These festivals offer a particularly inviting scene through which communities witnessed the repetition of emancipatory texts and a reconciliation of the meaning of such promises within an uncertain circumstance.

Third, I uncover Frederick Douglass's arguments on emancipation to better understand how his keynote speeches continue and sometimes contrast with his philosophy of public enactment of textual virtues. Indeed, Douglass had more opportunity than most speakers to influence perceptions of the Emancipation Proclamation within proximity of its verbal performance and display. Such potent intimacy between public discourse and ceremonial repetition is rarely accounted for in rhetorical studies. Even Douglass's best-known speech—"What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"—paired a biting critique of U.S. slave policy in coordinated conjunction with a ceremonial reading of the 1776 text, adding additional irony to the awkward celebration of American virtues.<sup>4</sup> When contrasted with his public philosophy of enacting textual virtues, Douglass's keynote speeches at August First celebrations contribute to the extensional constitution of the Emancipation Proclamation through public address. These speeches, while variant across twenty-six years, add a sense of how the memory of the Emancipation Proclamation was forged within the context of its repetition. Specifically, I analyze keynote speeches delivered in Elmira, New York in 1869; Melinda, New York in 1880; and Rochester, New York in 1885. As I argue later, Douglass' epideictic rhetoric remembering the Emancipation Proclamation alters the agency and effect of the text, eventually drawing the relationship between community and text closer as time progresses and the political promises of African American freedom become increasingly diminished.

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<sup>4</sup> The recital of the 1776 document is noted in Bernard K. Duffy and Richard D. Besel, "Recollection, Regret, and Foreboding in Frederick Douglass's Fourth of July Orations in 1852 and 1875" *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (2010): 7.

## PROCLAIMING AND EXPLAINING EMANCIPATION

No text better exemplifies the benefits of extensional constitutive discourse than the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. The text was confined to written language, conditional in scope, and framed as a reasoned war measure. Yet, through elaborate public attention, the document signifies a transformative break from the nation's relationship with slavery, and a movement toward the inclusive citizenship of former slaves. Few documents of American public discourse delivered so little while simultaneously being publicly imbued with so much. Indeed, this dualistic nature of the text was immediate from its formal introduction. The text was heralded upon its arrival as a partial—if not profound—success in combating slavery. As John Hope Franklin observed, the text surpassed the scope of Northern state laws and the emancipation of slaves in Washington, D.C. At last the incongruity between the United States' claim to be “the pioneer democracy of the Western World” and its legacy of slavery appeared to be partially corrected.<sup>5</sup> In Washington, D.C., Franklin noted, public recitals began immediately, and were followed by “unrestrained celebration” with “men squealing, women fainting, dogs barking, and whites and blacks shaking hands.”<sup>6</sup> With one rhetorical act nearly three million slaves within Confederate occupied states and cities were declared free. Eric Foner has noted that the text “culminated decades of struggle”

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<sup>5</sup> John Hope Franklin, *The Emancipation Proclamation* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1963 [1995]), 11-12.

<sup>6</sup> Franklin, *The Emancipation Proclamation*, 87.



and “evoked Christian visions of resurrection and redemption, of an era undoubted progress for a nation purged at last of the sin of slavery.”<sup>7</sup>

The external jubilee could not be found within the margins of Lincoln’s decree, however. As an array of historians and public address scholars have noted, the Emancipation Proclamation is Lincoln’s rhetorical outlier. The body of the text is largely a repetition of the 22 September preliminary emancipation proclamation, an invocation of authority that Lincoln defined as a “necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion,” paired with a detailed list of particular states and counties clarifying precisely where emancipation did and did apply.<sup>8</sup> Its cautious and conditional style made it a Lincoln’s “unhappiest” public document.<sup>9</sup> The language is reflective of a more nuanced and contextualized political strategy. As Allen Guelzo has noted, the its standing as “a legal document” did not make room for “the way of flourishes.”<sup>10</sup> Defenders of Lincoln argue the text is rhetorically exceptional for being unexceptional. Franklin has claimed Lincoln’s strategy was to “forge a document of freedom for the slaves within the existing constitutional system and in a manner that would give ever grater support to the constitutional system.”<sup>11</sup> Eric Foner echoes this sentiment, noting the duality of the document and its “exemption of Union-held areas” as evidence of Lincoln’s focus on keeping emancipation “legally assailable” while also gaining and

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863- 1877* (New York: Perennial Classics, 2002 [1989]), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Abraham Lincoln, “Final Emancipation Proclamation,” in *Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865* (New York: The Library of America, 1989), 424-425.

<sup>9</sup> Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation* (New York, London, Sydney, Toronto: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Guelzo, *Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Franklin, *The Emancipation Proclamation*, 127.

retaining the will of Northern constituents who may have “cared little about abolition but might support an act essential to military victory.”<sup>12</sup>

Despite, or perhaps because of the text’s stylistic blandness, the Emancipation Proclamation has lived only insofar as public commemorations have supported it. Edna Green Medford posits that the text’s significance lies in “the context of aspirations and expectations of a heretofore disinherited people.”<sup>13</sup> The text could be taken in more than one direction: it could either confirm “our faith that the principles we hold are immutable,” or that the text’s tentative approach signals a “disingenuous” aversion to our national ideals.<sup>14</sup> Though Medford concludes that Lincoln displayed “extraordinary legal and political genius” in writing the proclamation, the dual lens of the text persisted well after its public announcement, particularly between races: African Americans understood its “revolutionary implications” in the path to freedom, while whites largely sought to limit the Proclamation’s scope to “no broader meaning than release from bondage.”<sup>15</sup> With the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery was struck a mortal blow. The reach of this act, as Medford has highlighted, is reached by implication. Its reputation relied, therefore, on rhetoric of remembrance and social projection to highlight its significance in the public imagination.

In addition to playing a prominent role in freedom rallies and other commemorative occasions, artistic interpretations of the text moved immediately upon

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<sup>12</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Perennial Classics, 1988), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Edna Green Medford, Harold Holzer, Frank J. Williams, *The Emancipation Proclamation, Three Views: Social, Political, Iconographic* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>14</sup> Medford, Holzer, and Williams, *The Emancipation Proclamation*, 38 and 47.

<sup>15</sup> Medford, Holzer, and Williams, *The Emancipation Proclamation*, 47-48.

its public release. As Harold Holzer has argued, the illustrated life of the text varied in content and arrangement. Since the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in private, the public had no “emancipation moment” to crystalize the event for public understanding.<sup>16</sup> What resulted were varied incarnations visualizing the proclamation’s interaction with public issues, including Lincoln’s role as author, his reputation among past presidents, and the enduring meaning of both president and text following Lincoln’s unexpected death. Kirk Savage, moreover, has identified the importance of more permanent displays as contributors to the text’s public reputation. For Savage, the “standard image of emancipation” was derived from the abolitionist icon featuring “a kneeling black man in chains, his upraised arms imploring ‘Am I not a man and a brother?’”<sup>17</sup> Such images prompt the conclusion that the “black slave appears lowly and powerless,” usually positioned near to the ground, and in close proximity to the standing Christ-figure of Abraham Lincoln.<sup>18</sup> Thomas Ball’s *Freedman’s Memorial*, which was unveiled in Washington, D.C. in 1876, epitomizes this tension, and in Savage’s words, served to “anchor collective remembering” in perpetual public sight.<sup>19</sup>

Affection for the Emancipation Proclamation emerged with telling consistency. Absent a compelling or eloquent internal dynamic, the text lived via accompanying symbols that told (or showed) readers, listeners, and viewers a greater sense of its character than what it could convey with its own disposition. Kirt Wilson’s rhetorical

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<sup>16</sup> Medford, Holzer, and Williams, *The Emancipation Proclamation*, 112.

<sup>17</sup> Kirk Savage, “Molding Emancipation: John Quincy Adams Ward’s ‘The Freedman’ and the Meaning of the Civil War,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 27 (2001): 32.

<sup>18</sup> Savage, “Molding Emancipation,” 29.

<sup>19</sup> See Kirk Savage, “The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument,” in John R. Gillis (ed), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 127-149, particularly 130.

analysis of the document supports this conclusion. Wilson posits that the Emancipation Proclamation effectively embodies the contradictions of Lincoln and Civil War rhetoric generally. The nectar of the text, Wilson argues, is in its fusion to other forms of discourse, not its own properties. A first reading of the document prompts readers with a temporary perception of Lincoln's "deflection": such doubt is erased, however, when readers understand the text as an act which "remold[ed] the moment of emancipation into an iconic point of rupture that divides the past from the present and the more glorious future."<sup>20</sup> To reach this feat, however, the text must gain perspective from appropriation. Lincoln's Second Inaugural "minus the Proclamation," Wilson argues, "recast the Civil War as divine judgment, but when the Proclamation is added, judgment also brings absolution" because "the Proclamation required a Northern victory for its realization."<sup>21</sup> The Emancipation Proclamation is a unique political text: the expression of an incomplete idea. If we posit that the Emancipation Proclamation without the Second Inaugural, public statues, or lithographs is incomplete, a new question arises: What would reciting the Emancipation Proclamation mean without its encomiast, Frederick Douglass? Before exploring the intricacies of this question, we must first turn to the generic properties of August First celebrations, and the public philosophy of rhetorical texts evident in Douglass's preceding oratory.

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<sup>20</sup> Kirt Wilson, "The Paradox of Lincoln's Rhetorical Leadership," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 3 (2000): 22.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, "The Paradox of Lincoln's Rhetorical Leadership," 23.

## EMANCIPATION, COMMEMORATION, AND AUGUST FIRST

The Civil War killed institutional slavery in the United States.<sup>22</sup> The death of slavery and the birth of African American liberty was not a simultaneous set of occurrences. Once issued, however, the Emancipation Proclamation was quickly enveloped into an existing framework of Freedom Day celebrations that had been ongoing since the early 1800s. Commemorating the *act* of emancipation, like imagining its likeness in iconographic memorial or print, was nearly impossible. Compared to Memorial Day or other national holidays constructed around a person's birth or death, there is "no such clear consensus among Afro-Americans as to which [date] should be 'the official day,'" notes William Wiggins.<sup>23</sup> Gradual and unsteady, the movement toward emancipation took shape in a litany of state and city measures throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century, some of which became touchstone dates for commemoration, while others did not.<sup>24</sup>

Despite variance of calendar observances, most celebrations of black freedom were built on form of remembrance through consistency. The most steadfast component

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<sup>22</sup> Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 49.

<sup>23</sup> William Wiggins, *O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), xvii.

<sup>24</sup> Wiggins covers the significance of these dates in detail. Each calendar date corresponds to a celebrated legal precedent undermining slavery: January 1<sup>st</sup> marked the end of the slave trade in America (1801); July 4<sup>th</sup> marked the termination of slavery in New York state (1827); August 1<sup>st</sup> marked the end of English slavery in the West Indies (1834); April 16<sup>th</sup> settled the end of slavery in the District of Columbia (1862); September 22<sup>nd</sup> signaled the issuance of the preliminary Proclamation ahead of the January 1<sup>st</sup> document (1862); November 1<sup>st</sup> marked the termination of slavery in Maryland (1864); February 1<sup>st</sup>—a date to be later embraced throughout the twentieth century—signaled the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1870), a step considered to be an essential development legal and political freedom. See Wiggins, *O Freedom!* xix; June 19<sup>th</sup> is also widely acknowledged—particularly in Texas—as yet another calendar date to celebrate the meaning of emancipation. See: Ellen M. Litwicki, *America's Public Holidays, 1865-1920* (Washington, D.C., and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 54-55.

has remained the verbal performance of an abolition text. Historians of freedom day celebrations have posited that this precedent was set following the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in 1808. Marking the end of the slave trade in New York, for example, celebrants gathered to hear appropriate songs and a reading of “the congressional act of abolition,” usually with introductory remarks.<sup>25</sup> Mitch Katchun has noted that since 1808 the traditional commemoration of African American freedom included a “benediction, prayers of thanksgiving, the signing of hymns, and reading of the act of abolition” prior to a keynote address from a selected orator.<sup>26</sup> By the 1840s the emancipation of the British West Indies—at the time the more expansive of its kind—took precedence over celebrations of state and citywide acts of emancipation.<sup>27</sup> J.R. Kerr-Ritchie has supported this point, noting that the emergence of August First celebrations of West Indian emancipation served an important and hereto unseen function in the United States: celebrating the British act allowed participants to both “mobilize protest against American slavery,” while blending “the accomplished emancipation to the future emancipation” as a “link” that would result in the necessary expansion of liberty to American slaves.<sup>28</sup>

American abolitionists took note of British emancipation for good reason: it was, in Eric Foner’s words, “the first act of manumission by a major colonial power in the New World,” and a larger component of arguments for “the benefits of immediate

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<sup>25</sup> William B. Gravely, “The Dialectic of Double-Consciousness in Black American Freedom Celebrations, 1808-1863,” *Journal of Negro History* 67 (Winter 1982), 303.

<sup>26</sup> Mitch Katchun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808-1915* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 28.

<sup>27</sup> Katchun, *Festivals of Freedom*, 64.

<sup>28</sup> J.R. Kerr-Ritchie, *Rites of August First: Emancipation Day in the Black Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 2007), 49 and 57.

emancipation in the American south.”<sup>29</sup> The act was a “quintessentially English” exercise: “respect for order, legal processes, and the rights of property.”<sup>30</sup> Landowners maintained land rights and were compensated some twenty million pounds in the liberation process.<sup>31</sup> Despite instantaneous liberation of some 700,000 slaves, obligation to the emancipated ceased with the act itself: “No one,” Foner observed, “proposed compensating the slaves for their years of unrequited toil.”<sup>32</sup> Frederick Douglass’s relationship with the transitional act would be complicated over years of British post-emancipation policy. Like his abolitionist counterparts, his primary point of interest lay with understanding and remembering the act itself.<sup>33</sup> Such remembrance generated what William B. Gravely has called a transition in the “double consciousness,” or “dialectical experience—black and American” that constituted African American identity.”<sup>34</sup>

Orators of August First commemorations, Garvey has noted, shifted their emphasis on the constitutive of communal identity.

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<sup>29</sup> J.R. Kerr-Ritchie, *Rites of August First*, 49.

<sup>30</sup> Foner, *Nothing But Freedom*, 14. William A. Green has written more extensively on West Indian emancipation. Of special note, he writes that unlike Brazil or the United States, abolition of slavery in the British West Indies was aided by the fact that “economic circumstances” helped “the work of abolitionists”: dispelling slavery posed no threat to “the well-being or prosperity of the metropolitan community.” See: William A. Green *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 99.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Foner, *Nothing But Freedom*, 14.

<sup>33</sup> As Waldo E. Martin, Jr. has written, Frederick Douglass both “fulsomely praised” English policy of emancipating slaves, while at the same time criticized their later use of Asian, Irish, and “other subject British people” with immigrant labor across various continents.<sup>33</sup> In a text titled “A Comparison of Abolition Movements and Emancipation in Great Britain and the United States” dated 1892, Douglass stated, “We may deplore and detest her wars in Africa and in Egypt and declare that she has no business in either—and yet we can never forget or cease to applaud her rich contributions to the cause of justice and philanthropy.” Cited in Martin, *The Mind of Frederick Douglass* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 200.

<sup>34</sup> Garvey, “The Dialectic of Double-Consciousness in Black American Freedom Celebrations, 1808-1863,” 302; W.E.B. Du Bois discusses the notion of a “double consciousness” or a sense of “twoness” that defines African American life in his celebrated text, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 2.

The speakers paid less attention to the people's beginnings and made fewer references to an African past. They concentrated instead on how American slavery originated and on the struggle for freedom in America. They demonstrated that as a people they were committed to the liberation of blacks in slavery. In the process they affirmed that they had American as well as African roots, that the full meaning of the black saga, encompassing both sides of the dialectic, summed up the cultural transformation of African into 'colored Americans.'<sup>35</sup>

Some August First celebrations forged a concern with black liberation and the American experience by reciting the Declaration of Independence, arguably the original document of emancipation.<sup>36</sup> By the 1850s, celebrations of August First were widespread, stretching from the American northeast to Indiana, Minnesota, California, as well as "Canada, Liberia, and in the West Indian islands themselves."<sup>37</sup> Public remembrance met public education, as commemorations built around keynote speeches "were important educational and mobilizational vehicles for communicating with other blacks and with the broader society."<sup>38</sup>

Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was inserted into an ongoing practice of commemorating freedom, and the arrival of the new text quickly took center stage in collective abolitionist remembrance. The form of remembrance remained largely the same as attention turned to remembering American emancipation, with the singing of hymns and "reading of a freedom document" remaining steadfast components of epideictic display. "Since [American] Emancipation" in 1863, Wiggins has noted, participants "made a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation a favorite ritual," with readers taking immense pride in the honor.<sup>39</sup> The act of repetition is both temporal and

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<sup>35</sup> Garvey, "The Dialectic of Double-Consciousness in Black American Freedom Celebrations, 1808-1863," 308.

<sup>36</sup> Kerr-Ritchie, *Rites of August First*, 112.

<sup>37</sup> Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom*, 55.

<sup>38</sup> Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom*, 83.

<sup>39</sup> Wiggins, *O Freedom!* 34-35 and 117.



“politicizing”: performers remind observers “that they are legal, full-fledged citizens,” complete with “all the rights and privileges that accompany that status.”<sup>40</sup> It is too historically simplistic, however, to suggest that the emergence of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation subsumed reverence for August First remembrances. Scholarship on emancipation celebrations unfortunately paints such a picture. Historical studies by Kerr-Ritchie, Kachun, and Wiggins discuss August First celebrations as a *precursor* to remembering the 1863 text, and fail to acknowledge the rhetorical complexities of how the two celebrations later merged. Yet, remembrance continued well into the 1880s, nearly fifty years after the dissolution of slavery in the Upper and Lower Antilles, and over thirty years after the 1 January holiday of American emancipation. Still more pertinent, however, was the way in which adherence to the day persisted while adherence to the text commemorating August First was altered: following 1863 participants remembered West Indian abolition by reading the American Emancipation Proclamation. The rhetorical context in which the Emancipation Proclamation was reborn was, by any standard, remarkable for its intricacy.

Tentative in language and ambiguous in virtue, the Emancipation Proclamation was continuously revived in public recitation throughout multiple occasions and commemorations, some of which remembered a separate measure (West Indian Emancipation) on a different calendar date (August 1<sup>st</sup> or January 1<sup>st</sup>). The keynote speeches by Frederick Douglass offer insight as to how the Emancipation Proclamation was remembered within the complex context of being repeated on the holiday of a

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<sup>40</sup> Wiggins, *O Freedom!* 122.

separate act. Such overlapping texture provides ample opportunity to measure the extensional reach of the Emancipation Proclamation as it was pushed beyond its original moment and constrained in the political context of the late-nineteenth century, an era in which political “failures of Reconstruction began to bleed into disenchantment with Lincoln and the Proclamation.”<sup>41</sup> The critical question that remains: how did Douglass’s discourse position the relationship between a sense of communal identity and the memory of the Emancipation Proclamation? How did these speeches delivered within the realm of repetition invite a shared meaning of a text that, as we have witnessed, requires rhetorical accompaniment to be fully realized?

#### FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND THE POTENTIAL OF TEXTS

No voice was more influential in advocating both the rights of African Americans prior to the Civil War and the meaning of emancipation in the years that followed than Frederick Douglass.<sup>42</sup> With a speaking career spanning nearly fifty years,

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<sup>41</sup> Guelzo, *Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation*, 245.

<sup>42</sup> The scholarly literature on Frederick Douglass is expansive. Of work that considers Douglass’s rhetorical discourse specifically, readers should consider: Gary S. Selby, “Mocking the Sacred: Frederick Douglass’s ‘Slaveholder’s Sermon’ and the Antebellum Debate over Religion and Slavery” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99 (2002): 326-241; Omedi Ochieng, “A Ruthless Critique of Everything Existing: Frederick Douglass and the Architectonic of African American Radicalism” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (March-April 2011): 168-184; Gregory Stephens, “Frederick Douglass’ Multiracial Abolitionism: ‘Antagonistic Cooperation’ and ‘Redeemable Ideals’ in the July 5 Speech” *Communication Studies* 48 (Fall 1997): 175-194; Angela Ray, “Frederick Douglass on the Lyceum Circuit: Social Assimilation, Social Transformation” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5 (2002): 625-648; John Louis Lucaites, “The Irony of ‘Equality’ in Black Abolitionist Discourse: The Case of Frederick Douglass’s ‘What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?’” in *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Thomas W. Benson (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 47-70; James Jasinski, “Rearticulating History in Epideictic Discourse: Frederick Douglass’s ‘The Meaning of the Fourth of July to the Negro,’” also in *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, 71-90; For a detailed study of Douglass’s public and political career, see: Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *The Mind of Frederick Douglass* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press), 1984; David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass’ Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press), 1989; and also Blight’s more recent, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst and Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press), 2002.

Douglass's reputation as the African American "jeremiah" was well deserved.<sup>43</sup> Omedi Ochieng, among others, has noted Douglass's transformation of public advocacy. Though once closely affiliated with William Lloyd Garrison's framework viewing abolitionism as a contest between a corrupt Constitution and the moral righteousness of abolitionism, Douglass shifted perspective in the late 1840s and early 1850s to include political involvement in part of anti-slavery campaigns. Garrison famously proclaimed the Constitution an "agreement with hell."<sup>44</sup> As his public career advanced, Douglass endorsed political action and proposed the Constitution to be "essentially contested," not inherently corrupt: winning the fight against slavery necessitated that abolitionists "reclaim the institutions that they ceded to slaveholders."<sup>45</sup> For Douglass, reclamation of America's founding essence was a battle of interpretation.

One underpinning philosophy of Douglass's interpretation of American history was a sense of Enlightenment progress. Ronald Sundstrom has called this a belief in the "inevitability of Western Christendom's advance toward justice and human brotherhood," a belief that would be tested in light of American regression on civil rights in the late-nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup> Douglass's appealed to assimilation and amalgamation of an American culture that embraced differences beyond "cultural hierarchies," and was evaluated, according to Angela Ray, based on the individual's experience.<sup>47</sup> His

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<sup>43</sup> David Howard-Pitney, *The African American Jeremiad: Appeals for Justice in America, Revised and Expanded Edition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 15.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Mason Lowance, ed, *A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debates in America, 1776-1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 335.

<sup>45</sup> Omedi Ochieng, "A Ruthless Critique of Everything Existing," 177.

<sup>46</sup> Ronald Sundstrom, "Frederick Douglass's Longing for the End of Race," *Philosophia Africana* 8 (August 2005), 149.

<sup>47</sup> Angela Ray, "Frederick Douglass on the Lyceum Circuit," 626.

conception of a millennial America held special prestige, though its “strength and potential,” Ray clarifies, varied according to “the mental progress of U.S. citizens toward an ideal in which racial or ethnic or religious differences ceased to be used as bases for social stratification.”<sup>48</sup> Progress was inevitable, but the likelihood of attaining such progress was dependent on actions taken by citizens and leaders. Confronting this ideal of Enlightenment through the acceptance of African Americans into white culture was frustrating work, particularly in the epoch following the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Part of Douglass’s public appeal was his “symbolic personality” as a “living monument” of the times—an orator abolitionist and former slave.<sup>49</sup> Such an identity helped his efforts to rhetorically refashion the perception of the Civil War and the political development to follow.<sup>50</sup> Douglass understood the malleable nature of collective memory and its central role in placing ideas in practice. Part of his reconciliation toward the U.S. Constitution, for example, was his belief that key provisions of the document were “a source of antislavery principles,” while the text’s place in history had “made it proslavery in practice.”<sup>51</sup> Highlighting the tension between ideals and ironic practice was a forte of Douglass’s rhetoric. Emancipation Day ceremonies, in kind, occupied a special place in his estimation. Here was a time when blacks could, in the words of David Blight, “claim a new and secure social identity”

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<sup>48</sup> Blight clarifies the nature of Douglass’s millennialism as his vision of American nationalism: “[M]illennialism helped foster an American sense of mission, a belief that the United States was the ‘redeemer nation’ destined to perform a special role in history.” See: *Frederick Douglass’ Civil War*, 102; Ray, “Frederick Douglass on the Lyceum Circuit,” 640.

<sup>49</sup> David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass’ Civil War*, 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> Blight, *Frederick Douglass’ Civil War*, 1-2.

<sup>51</sup> Blight, *Frederick Douglass’ Civil War*, 32.

while exploring “an ‘epoch’ full of lessons and responsibilities about the meaning of historical memory.”<sup>52</sup> As Blight further explains, the last third of Douglass’s life was an effort to preserve a past age, and an effort against the conventional presumption that “reunion trumped race”: by “preserving the memory of the Civil War” and confronting “Black invisibility in America’s cultural memory,” Douglass presented Americans—black and white—with a vision born through commemoration of the war.<sup>53</sup> As the following analysis demonstrates, part of Douglass’s later strategy to correct the racist cultural presumptions of the time was to reimagine the emancipation text, the agency and meaning of its promise, and its relation to the black citizens it was meant to affect.

As I discussed in chapter two, the communal choice to re-introduce texts into an epideictic setting reflects a communal vision by which to memorialize public discourse. Repeating the proclamation encourages a public memory derived from mutation, or what Vivian has called “a repetition that generates memory precisely through a series of mnemonic differences and transformations.”<sup>54</sup> The Emancipation Proclamation does not change in content. Repeated anew each time, it is instead nestled within an array of situational weavings constraining and expanding its applicability and scope within each given moment. To account for every iteration or reference of the text in the Reconstruction age would be impossible. Thanks go the archival record, however, we know how the most revered speaker for African American rights crystalized the text in his commemorative keynote speeches. Emphasizing the discourse around repetition

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<sup>52</sup> David Blight, *Frederick Douglass’ Civil War*, 220.

<sup>53</sup> David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield*, 94, 99, and 112.

<sup>54</sup> Bradford Vivian, ‘A Timeless Now’: Memory and Repetition,” in *Framing Public Memory* (ed), Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 204.

does not, I argue, leave critics in the lurch in terms of accounting for what Michael Leff called “larger discursive developments” that bring a text into being as “a social product—as something constructed through a process that submits to and appropriates the authority of the other.”<sup>55</sup> “Specific textual practices,” Leff elaborated, “should tell us something about how a key symbol of national identity could be interpreted, reinterpreted, and assimilated into the changing social and cultural milieu.”<sup>56</sup> We cannot know for certain how audience members perceived the Emancipation Proclamation upon hearing it recited on August First celebrations. A rhetorical analysis of Douglass’s keynote speeches, however, will illustrate how audiences were invited to re-imagine their relationship to the past, and the significance of Lincoln’s words.

The framework by which Douglass’s speeches are examined is understandably narrow. Our primary focus resides with how the Emancipation Proclamation is interpreted through Douglass’s rhetoric, and thereby privileges instances wherein the text is emphasized through his rhetorical invention and disposition. Douglass’s commemorations of the Emancipation Proclamation were deliberate attempts to refashion the text as public memory. Specifically, Douglass focused on attributing a sense of agency to the text in two important ways: how the proclamation came to being, and what affect it has on the listening audience. When Douglass speaks of the emancipation edict, it is to explain where it came from and what it is doing. These themes often merge in the course of his speech. A text like the Emancipation

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<sup>55</sup> Michael Leff, “Lincoln Among the Nineteenth-Century Orators,” in *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed, Thomas W. Benson (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 134.

<sup>56</sup> Leff, “Lincoln Among the Nineteenth-Century Orators,” 135.

Proclamation emerges from a particular point of agency, but is evaluated as a single point in a larger process informed by an Enlightenment sensibility of progress, which, in turn, is contemplated through the application of principles in political practice.

To assist my reading of Douglass's August First rhetoric, I employ the critical framework in Kenneth Burke's theory of dramatism, and his presumption that a speaker's language will reveal the relationship between ideas that determine their "motivational assumptions."<sup>57</sup> Burke's perspective becomes a helpful way to explain the memory of the Emancipation Proclamation in Douglass's keynote speeches since the question of agency, or how the text came into being, affects the memory of the text in the present. As Burke writes, the basic components of a speaker or writer's task are: "Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, Purpose": "the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose*."<sup>58</sup> Burke's conception of dramatisic ratios offers insight to how statements reveal an explanation of rhetorical positions. Tracing a rhetor's emphasis on one or more aspects of dramatism as influencing the other, Burke posited, gave critics a useful method by which to understand the symbolic charge of public discourse. "The ratios," Burke stated, "are principles of determination."<sup>59</sup> Use of different ratios can convey different attitudes toward the ideas and objects under consideration. Using Burke's framework of

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<sup>57</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1969), 11.

<sup>58</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, xv.

<sup>59</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 15.

dramatistic ratios helps us answer the question of what the Emancipation Proclamation is doing in August First readings, and how Douglass's keynote speeches extensionally constitute its being in the world. As Marie Hochmuth famously noted, in Burke's vision of ratios, "if a situation is said to be of a certain nature, a corresponding attitude toward it is implied."<sup>60</sup>

As I explain in the following analysis, Douglass's always conceived of the Emancipation Proclamation as a textual process, not a textual event. In contrast to his earlier addresses, his later August First speeches highlight an increased emphasis on the agency through which the proclamation came to be. Following my analysis of these speeches, I conclude by drawing implications of Douglass's rhetoric in terms of its participation within a community of memory, the text's extensional identity, and the relationship between repetition and ceremonial virtue.

## REIMAGINING THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

Prior to the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, August First celebrations gave Douglass the opportunity to contrast British and American laws on slavery, and frame the act of West Indian emancipation as the advancement of a global struggle toward enlightened freedom. Speaking to a celebration in 1857, Douglass borrowed the religious language of John Winthrop by likening the British emancipation decree to "a city set upon a hill," and a "stunning and killing condemnation" of slavery that was "the most interesting and sublime event of the nineteenth-century."<sup>61</sup> The *act* in

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<sup>60</sup> Marie Hochmuth, "Kenneth Burke and the 'New Rhetoric,'" in *Readings in Rhetoric*, ed. Lionel Crocker and Paul A. Carmack (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1965), 571.

<sup>61</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Significance of Emancipation in the West Indies: An Address Delivered in Canandaigua, New York, on 3 August 1857," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches*,



question, however, was not a national feat. Instead, Douglass fostered two dominant ratios: *purpose-act* and *agent-act*. The movement toward emancipation was, Douglass explained, a “spiritual triumph,” and “one of those glorious emanations of Christianity, which, like the sun in the Heavens, takes no cognizance of national lines or geographical boundaries, but pours its golden floods of living light upon all.”<sup>62</sup> God worked through the people to bring freedom to the enslaved. It was the “great Rule of the Universe, the God and Father of all men,” who “roused the British conscience by his truth, moved the British heart, and West India Emancipation was the result.”<sup>63</sup> Providentially endowed, the spiritual energy of emancipation was assisted by both members of the British government as well as “the slaves themselves,” who gave protest to their condition and, in turn, “assisted in bringing about that state of public opinion which finally resulted in their emancipation.”<sup>64</sup> This dual perspective of purpose and agent cooperation toward the act was repeated in a similar appeal in an 1858 speech delivered in Poughkeepsie, New York.<sup>65</sup> These preliminary remarks preceding later August First orations highlight Douglass’s rhetorical framing of the British proclamation’s status as derivative of both *purpose* and *agent* actions upon the advance of freedom. Key events are not officially derived, in Douglass’s remembrance. They grow from divine and political action alike.

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*Debates, and Interviews Volume 3: 1855-1863*, ed, John W. Blassingame (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 189 and 194.

<sup>62</sup> Douglass, “The Significance of Emancipation in the West Indies,” 199.

<sup>63</sup> Douglass, “The Significance of Emancipation in the West Indies,” 199.

<sup>64</sup> Douglass, “The Significance of Emancipation in the West Indies,” 207; Douglass, “Freedom in the West Indies: An Address Delivered in Poughkeepsie, New York, on 2 August 1858,” 216.

<sup>65</sup> Douglass, “Freedom in the West Indies: An Address Delivered in Poughkeepsie, New York, on 2 August 1858,” in John W. Blassingame (ed), *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews Volume 3: 1855-1863* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 216.

Like other abolitionists of the antebellum era, Douglass also used his early August First orations to draw a contrast between American and British actions against slavery. Speaking in 1858, he framed the calendar of freedom's advance by complimenting the British and deriding failed attempts in the United States. "The celebration," he stated, separating himself from his American audience, "comes opportunely just after your National Anniversary. It laps on and supplies a deficiency, in the exercises of that day. It takes up the principles of the American Revolution, where you drop them, and bears on them onward to high and more beneficent applications."<sup>66</sup> Returning to an *agent-act* ratio, Douglass reminds listeners that the exalted achievement of British emancipation was both "glorious" and emergent from "small things," such as the "patient labors of that purest and most clear-sighted of all the anti-slavery men" who directed the campaign for abolition.<sup>67</sup> Individual effort by the likes of Granville Sharpe and other English abolitionists support Douglass's claim that emancipation derived from public energy. This prompt lays the groundwork for his closing appeal: the American advancement modeled after the British achievement. The people should act, Douglass concluded, "with increasing determination to spend and be spent, to live and die, to fall or to flourish in breaking the fetters from the limbs, not of eight hundred thousand slaves of the British West Indies, but of Four Millions of slaves in the United States of America."<sup>68</sup> Douglass's August First orations prior to the Emancipation Proclamation

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<sup>66</sup> Douglass, "Freedom in the West Indies," 223.

<sup>67</sup> Douglass, "Freedom in the West Indies," 241.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

presented audiences with a logic that accomplishment of freedom emerged from a combination of providential and political activity.

In addition to relevant ratios evident in prior speeches, a second component of Douglass' rhetoric is important to note before we explore his late nineteenth-century August First speeches. If official texts were derived from some combination of mystic energy and political protest, their promises as public virtues were perpetually up for grabs. Indeed, as his writings and speeches make clear, Douglass endorsed the view that remembering texts was a continual process of evaluating how they have made a difference in people's lives as word made flesh. In his autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, he confronts the view that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was a weak public statement against slavery. Though "confined" and "inspired by the low motive of military necessity," Douglass finds the life of the text in its application, not its original form: "For my own part, I took the proclamation, first and last, for a little more than it purported, and saw in its spirit a life and power far beyond its letter."<sup>69</sup> The same logic that saw promise in the Constitution despite its misapplication by advocates of slavery was mutually applicable to a new text, or, in Douglass's conception, a new promise.

The question remained as to whether the public and those in political power would make good on the text's potential. Assigning the Proclamation as an always-yet-to-be-enacted potential allowed Douglass to frame individual issues in light of materializing ideals. For instance, in a speech delivered 6 February 1863—just two

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<sup>69</sup> Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies* (New York: The Library of America, 1994), 792.

months after the edict was declared law—Douglass defined the admittance of black soldiers to the union army as a way to either sustain or denigrate the meaning of the text. Lincoln’s proclamation was the “first principle” of truth and an achievement for humankind, Douglass wrote, using familiar tones he previously ascribed to the West Indian emancipation, but the true power of the text lay in replacing the dissenting view that the text was merely “an ink and paper proclamation.” Douglass’s response to this point becomes a key element to interpreting his later August First speeches, and warrants greater elaboration here.

The objector might go a step further, and assert that there was a time when this Proclamation was only a thought, a sentiment, an idea—a hope of some radical Abolitionist—for such it truly was. But what of it? The world has never advanced a single inch in the right direction, when the movement could not be traced to some such small beginning. The bill abolishing Slavery, and ringing freedom to eight hundred thousand people in the West Indies, was a paper bill. The Reform bill, that broke up the rotten borough system in England, was a paper bill. The act of Catholic Emancipation was a paper act; and so was the bill repealing the Corn Laws. Greater than all, our own Declaration of Independence was at one time but ink on paper. The freedom of the American colonies dates from no particular battle during the war. No man can tell upon what particular day we won our national independence. But the birth of our freedom is fixed on the day of the going forth of the Declaration of Independence. In like manner after coming generations will celebrate the first of January as the day which brought liberty and manhood to the American slaves. How shall this be done? I answer: *That the paper Proclamation must now be made iron, lead, and fire, by the prompt employment of the negro’s arm in the contest. I hold that the Proclamation, good as it is, will be worthless—a miserable mockery—unless the nation shall so far conquer its prejudice as to welcome into the army full-grown black men to help fight the battles of the republic.*<sup>70</sup>

For Douglass, the Emancipation Proclamation, or any text of public importance, is a sentiment in process. The rhetorical positioning and remembrance of the text, then, was a crucial part of measuring how well the idea lived in the world of human interests and

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<sup>70</sup> Frederick Douglass, “The Proclamation And a Negro Army: An Address Delivered in New York, New York, on 6 February 1863,” in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews Volume 3: 1855-1863*, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 563-564, *emphasis mine*.

issues, which, depending on the time of reflection, could be accepted or deflected through an ideological commitment to the expanding sphere of human liberty.

By the time Douglass addressed crowds in the later half of the nineteenth-century, justifying the connection between the Civil War and political issues of civil rights was increasingly difficult. During the last third of his life, Blight wrote, Douglass's public leadership was defined by "his quest to preserve the memory of the Civil War as he believed blacks and the nation should remember it."<sup>71</sup> Emancipation holidays, in particular, were times of "national celebration in which all blacks, the low and the mighty, could claim a new a secure social identity," a feat greatly at odds with a nation "indifferent or hostile to that legacy."<sup>72</sup> As Martha Watson and Thomas Burkholder have noted, the Republican Party in particular seemed "to lose interest in African Americans after Reconstruction."<sup>73</sup> Following the withdrawal of federal troops in 1877, Jackson Lears has claimed, the United States entered a "new phase of racial politics," namely the transition wherein "Emancipation dissolved in the discourse of reunion."<sup>74</sup> The slow de-evolution of legal accomplishments and disappointment to previous progress were accentuated in the 1883 invalidation of the Civil Rights act of 1875 by the Supreme Court, effectively stripping the potency and enforcement of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments in particular states.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield*, 94.

<sup>72</sup> Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield*, 94.

<sup>73</sup> Martha Watson and Thomas Burkholder, "The Gilded Age and the New America," in *Rhetoric of Nineteenth Century Reform*, eds, Watson and Burkholder (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2008), xviii.

<sup>74</sup> Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 96 and 25-26.

<sup>75</sup> Martha Watson and Thomas Burkholder, "The Gilded Age and the New America," xviii.

Douglass's task was immense. Assigned with remembering the American Emancipation Proclamation at a point of diminishing progress on Civil Rights within the context—and perceived importance—of the British West Indian emancipation gave rise to noticeable tension. However, through his keynote addresses, we begin to understand how his language approached this uneasy context by extend and constrain the words brought into being in the present. Letters and words lived on paper, Douglass would suggest, but that paper can be made firm and productive when applied to the political questions of the day, regardless of their difficulty.

*Medina, New York—1869*

The 1869 keynote address in Medina, New York illustrates the general themes of Douglass's commemorative rhetoric of August First. This text draws on the memory of the Emancipation Proclamation and the West Indian emancipation edict in a way that leaves the extensional character of each in uneasy confusion, however. In a rare change, Douglass advocates leaving August First celebrations behind as a means of protesting the recent controversy of involving British appeals for compensation of ships made for the Confederacy that were destroyed during the Civil War. Upsetting the conventional memorialization of the date, and discouraged by the recent turn of the British government, Douglass remembers both primary texts of the day in a way that fails to provide a constitutive vision of collective understanding. Cultural values of his audience and the virtues evident from the Emancipation Proclamation failed to connect.

Douglass begins his address with the deductive reasoning that “great events” are worthy of public celebration, but only to the degree they have “changed and improved

the conditions of men” through effect.<sup>76</sup> Previewing his second premise, Douglass suggests that events can be “transient or permanent, general or special, partly according to the character of the events themselves, and partly to the sensibility and constancy of the people affected by them.”<sup>77</sup> To commemorate or not to commemorate is determined by both what happened in the past and what remains in the present. To complete the necessary conclusion, Douglass categorizes August First as a “transient” day, a fall from its previous position. “The celebration of the day,” he stated, used to offer American abolitionists the chance to contrast “the noble example of Britain with the mean example of America,” but now the tides have shifted: “neither the event, nor the example serves such useful purpose.”<sup>78</sup> The present defines the past. British emancipation was “sublime,” though “dwarfed in comparison with emancipation in our own country,” Douglass states.<sup>79</sup> England’s fall from antislavery grace is regretful, Douglass further notes, but clearly evident in the present controversy outlined by Senator Charles Sumner the previous April. The controversy in question emerged from requested compensation for money lost to American merchant fleet damaged by British-made Confederate ships, and England’s reluctance to submit such payment.<sup>80</sup> Britain has failed to live up to the virtues of its past act, and by proxy, the ground on which they commemorate has shifted: what was once a decree that provided the “hope of our slave-holding rebels” has brought

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<sup>76</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free: An Address Delivered At Medina, New York, On 3 August 1869,” in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches and Interviews, Volume 4, 1864-1880*, eds, John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 220.

<sup>77</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 220.

<sup>78</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 222.

<sup>79</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 220.

<sup>80</sup> See John W. Blassingame (ed), *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews Volume 3: 1855-1863* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 225-226n.

into sharp relief a divide between “English practice and English professions.”<sup>81</sup> Filtered through the moment and a commitment to remembering the moral sentiment of the Civil War, Douglass chooses to distance—not unite—the emancipation efforts of the two countries, stating, “It was no fault of that Government that the slave-holders of America lost their hold upon the throats of four millions slaves, and that those millions are now rejoicing in the freedom from chains.”<sup>82</sup>

Previous commemoration texts credited England with giving America its abolitionist movement. Here, however, Douglass again emphasizes the *purpose-act* ratio, presuming that the abolition of slavery was a cosmic event, “one of those great oscillations of human thought” which spread through both England and the world.<sup>83</sup> Though Douglass supports his previous *agent-act* view that popular will forged emancipation, he claims a worldwide phenomenon wherein “people awoke” and overturned tyranny of all kinds.<sup>84</sup> Though muted in precise reference, the American proclamation is endeared with a new, privileged position in this speech. Americans may resume celebrating August First, Douglass stated, when the country “shall put herself in harmony” with abolitionists and “the emancipation of 1834”; until then, “I commend to you not the first of August, but the first of January, not 1834, but 1863, not West India emancipation, but emancipation in the United States for commemoration.”<sup>85</sup>

In his respective speeches to 1857 and 1858 commemorations of British emancipation, Douglass positioned the act in the British Caribbean emerging from the

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<sup>81</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Freed,” 225-226.

<sup>82</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 227.

<sup>83</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 228.

<sup>84</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 223.

<sup>85</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 228.



context of active, even disruptive, efforts by abolitionists and slaves. In his 1869 critique of the country—and the holiday—however, the agency of the act has been altered both for the memory of English and American emancipation: “Whence came the abolition of Slavery? The abolitionist says Garrison. The theologian says, God. The politician says, Lincoln. The statesman says, the war.”<sup>86</sup> Each of these are rejected by Douglass’s insistence that slavery fell by “the hand of its own progeny,” a system that self-destructed.<sup>87</sup> Such remembrance of the Emancipation Proclamation offers an ambiguous relationship between a text repeated and a listening audience. Though revived in memory, the connection between public involvement and perceivable change is unstated.

By the conclusion of the speech, Douglass appeals to close adherence to ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment, and a greater acknowledgment that “we have not yet been fully admitted to the glorious temple of American liberty.”<sup>88</sup> This speech provides listeners, with an uneven image of both the West Indian Emancipation and the Emancipation Proclamation. The text is remembered as both a preferred point of freedom’s advancement in stark contrast to the sins of Britain, while at the same time the result of an ambiguous global movement seemingly kissed with the blessing of cosmic happenstance, not organized in public agitation. The Emancipation Proclamation is remembered between two poles, at once a source of rightful celebration, though not yet fulfilled within the context of social equality. As time continued, however, Douglass’

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<sup>86</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 230.

<sup>87</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 230.

<sup>88</sup> Douglass, “We Are Not Yet Quite Free,” 231.

rhetoric at August First celebrations—and other moments of ceremonial repetition—underwent transformation, and with time, new relationships emerged between abolition texts and their extensional meaning within the moment of repetition.

*Elmira, New York—1880*

The final two August First speeches in this analysis signal a transition in Douglass's strategies of remembering the Emancipation Proclamation. Douglass alters his remembrance of the text as a document not only living in the present, but born from context of active citizen involvement. These speeches demonstrate Douglass's conception of the text as process and his memory of the Emancipation Proclamation constitute an image of the 1863 edict that complements a more productive fusion between the words repeated in epideictic reverence to the communal identity and unfulfilled needs of the present.

In his 1880 address commemorating the West Indian emancipation, Douglass once again unites the memories of American and British abolition acts and the preceding public movements that put them into effect. Complimenting what he defined as “pre-eminently the colored man's day,” Douglass gives lop-sided attention in his speech to the upcoming presidential election and his endorsement of the Republican Party and James Garfield.<sup>89</sup> Prior to his partisan appeals, however, Douglass invests considerable detail to the history of emancipation between Britain and the United States. In the time since the Elmira address, he has come to terms with the complex history of Great Britain, and accepts the notion that there “were two Englands” during the Civil War, “as

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<sup>89</sup> Frederick Douglass, “The Lessons of Emancipation To the New Generation: An Address Delivered in Elmira, New York, on 3 August 1880,” 564.

there were two Americas, and that one was true to liberty while the other was true to slavery.”<sup>90</sup> In recounting memories of these two texts, however, Douglass makes more substantial deviations from his prior engagement with August First and the memory of the Emancipation Proclamation.

First, Douglass closely recounts the path to achieving American emancipation by directing appeals away from a cosmic agency and instead fuses his remembrance of the texts with the involvement of black citizens. Returning to a greater focus on an *agent-act* ratio, Douglass emphasizes the human element that directed the expansion of freedom. West India emancipation was “transformative” and saw “a bondage of ages ended,” Douglass maintains, sharing that “human liberty excludes all idea of home and abroad. It is universal and disdains localization.”<sup>91</sup> The essential component of the occasion, Douglass clarifies, is both the “matter of it” and the “manner of it”: British emancipation fell untraditionally not by the sword, but “by the word—not by brute force of numbers, but by the still small voice of truth,” and “peaceful agitation.”<sup>92</sup> Invoking the names of British abolitionists, Douglass offers grateful thanks for “the exercises of peaceful human power” that enacted difference. The power of public advocacy exemplified by the British, Douglass claims, adds perspective to what may be attained “without the aid of armies on the earth or of angles in the sky.”<sup>93</sup> “It shows,” he states more clearly, “that men have in their own hands the means of putting all their moral and political enemies under their feet, and making this world a good and pleasant place for

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Frederick Douglass, “West India Emancipation,” excerpt from the speech in Elmira, New York, 1 August 1880, printed in *Autobiographies* (New York: Library of America, 1994), 927.

<sup>92</sup> Douglass, “West India Emancipation,” 928.

<sup>93</sup> Douglass, “West India Emancipation,” 928.

mankind *if they will but use them*.”<sup>94</sup> The point of origin of British West Indian Emancipation is essential to black citizens, he states further. “Let not Americans, especially no colored Americans withhold a generous recognition of this glorious achievement,” he continues, drawing a clear causal claim from British emancipation to American success insomuch as the prior event *was utilized as* “a tremendous lever in the hands of American Abolitionists.”<sup>95</sup> As a causal claim, it was the activists, not the act itself that spurs the act worthy of remembrance today. The origin of both texts, finally, is finessed in Douglass’s logic from the “peaceful agitation” of abolitionists that changed the face of British colonies to the active involvement of American abolitionists to alter the landscape of their freedom.

British freedom was a useful tool in the hands of American abolitionists. At every turn, Douglass traces the history between British and American Emancipation by beginning with the effect, not of one text on the other, but of one campaign’s influence on the other. For example, he elaborates that England is “the mother too of *our abolition movement*,” though “her Emancipation came in peace and ours in war; though hers cost treasure and ours blood, though hers was the result of a sacred preference, and ours resulted in part from necessity, the motive and mainspring of the respective measures were the same in both.”<sup>96</sup> The common origin is abolitionism. In one sense, he continues, “England is responsible for our civil war. The abolition of slavery in the West Indies gave life and vigor to the abolition movement in America.”<sup>97</sup> In more

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<sup>94</sup> Douglass, “West India Emancipation,” 928.

<sup>95</sup> Douglass, “West India Emancipation,” 929.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

explicit commemorative fashion, the thing remembered and worshiped is not the memory of a text, but the memory of the audience themselves.

While this mode of remembrance invests British abolitionism with credit for giving American abolitionists a functional case for swaying the public, it also relegates the Emancipation Proclamation to relative uncertainty. Though he is quick to credit British emancipation with prompting effective abolitionism in America, Douglass is equally quick to disregard any pretense of finality. “We celebrate this day too for the very good reason that we have no other to celebrate. English Emancipation has one advantage over American Emancipation. Hers has a definitive anniversary. Ours has none. Like our slave, the freedom of the negro has no birth-day. No man can tell the day of the month, or the month of the year, upon which slavery was abolished in the United States.”<sup>98</sup> In recounting the progress toward freedom, Douglass traces the key events of the Civil War, finally coming upon “the first of January 1863” wherein “we had the proclamation itself, and still the end was not yet. Slavery was hurting and dying but it was not dead, and no man can tell just what its foul spirit departed from our land, if indeed it has yet departed, and hence we do not know what do we may properly celebrate as coupled with this great American event.”<sup>99</sup> Neither Douglass nor his listeners can know the status of the Emancipation Proclamation because of its indeterminate effectiveness: “How stands the case with the recently emancipated millions of colored people in our own country?”<sup>100</sup> The answer reveals the life of the

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<sup>98</sup> Douglass, “West India Emancipation,” 930.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

text. “By law, by the constitution of the United States, slavery has no existence in our country. The legal form has been abolished,” he continues, dissociating legal title with actual events: black citizens live a “mockery” of free life, reflective of the tension and historically unfriendly conditions of emancipation, specifically, the fact that liberty for the African American came “not by moral choice, but my military necessity.”<sup>101</sup>

Douglass’s 1880 keynote speech leaves the extensional character of the Emancipation Proclamation in flux. While his memory of the occasion provides a world wherein the agitating citizen and abolitionist can spur transformative change, the Emancipation Proclamation’s lasting impact, or discernable effect remains ineffective: it neither initiated freedom (the actions as a result of British emancipation did that), nor has been implemented to guarantee rights (black citizenship is a mockery). The agency of future change will arise, Douglass maintains, with the need to “resolutely struggle on in the belief that we by patience, industry, and uprightness, and economy may hasten that better day.”<sup>102</sup> A change—or the enactment of the principles promised in emancipation—will arise from within, not without. Imbuing his audience with the power to reach attainable change, Douglass transitions to his long explanation of the presidential election, emphasizing the relevancy of their collective agency, stating, “[Y]ou are fifteen thousand in number, and your vote may turn the scale one way or the other, and say whether this country shall be ruled by a party of liberal ideas, by justice and fair play, or by a party especially distinguished by its devotion to slavery, rebellion

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<sup>101</sup> Douglass, “West India Emancipation,” 931.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

and bitter prejudice against the race which you belong.”<sup>103</sup> It is the “political relation” that reigns supreme in the question of liberation, Douglass expounds, and no other decision requires more special attention. Douglass’s Elmira speech reinforces his position on texts as an evolving process, though leaves the relationship between audience members and the particular text in question uncertain.

*Rochester, New York—1885*

Twenty years after Appomattox, Douglass’s judgment on African American liberties and the meaning of emancipation altered considerably. Between his remarks in Elmira and his 1885 address in Rochester, the Supreme Court officially rebuked the Civil Rights Act of 1875, and a greater minimizing of race seemed to be underway in the name of sectional reunion. Though this speech finds Douglass continuing to focus on the emancipation’s emergence in the United States and England, and its meaning within the context of the African American’s struggle in the present, this address embodies an additional change to his previous comments and the relationship between audience, agency, and the extensional possibilities of a text remembered.

The Rochester address begins with similar appeals and style as the Elmira speech five years earlier: Douglass proclaims the importance of the day and the contribution of both emancipation texts to the larger effort of “the moral and material progress of mankind.”<sup>104</sup> Contrary to his previous orations, however, Douglass defines the Emancipation Proclamation in greater clarity than his previous texts allowed, noting its

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<sup>103</sup> Douglass, “The Lessons of Emancipation to the New Generation,” 581.

<sup>104</sup> Frederick Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand: An Address Delivered in Rochester, New York, On 6 August 1885,” in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, Volume 5: 1881-1895*, eds, John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 192.

national importance despite its status as “the exercise of...war powers under the constitution” of the United States.<sup>105</sup> This early demarcation of the text seems to narrow its functional scope, and signals an early memory of the text akin to Lincoln’s original language of limited application and legalese. Regardless, the date and the celebration are fitting, Douglass continues, due to the interconnectedness of the two countries, whose efforts are combined in the calendar of human progress: “It was the sunny month of August that brought emancipation” to slaves in the British West Indies, and “the month of September that brought the same class of sufferers in the United States the first joyous note or intimation of President Lincoln’s famous emancipation proclamation.”<sup>106</sup> To this introduction, Douglass has positioned the text repeated as official in nature, and, in-step with the conventions of Emancipation Day celebrations, attributed credit to Abraham Lincoln, rather than causally derived from the preceding British emancipation. The design of this speech, however, goes further in positioning the memory of text in question as a memory of accomplishment *and* precursor for future achievements.

This point is addressed most clearly following Douglass’s argument that emancipation is universal in principle, not nationality, and “the common right of all nations, kindred, tongues and people.”<sup>107</sup> American Emancipation is again remembered as superior to its British counterpart. The causal connection once forged between British abolitionists and the emergence of emancipation in America described in his Elmira address is substantially clearer and more precise. First, Douglass reframes the order in

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<sup>105</sup> Frederick Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 192.

<sup>106</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 193-194.

<sup>107</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 194.



which his audience is invited to understand emancipation originating as something greater than text alone. The presence of a text is subverted in favor of the slower process from which it emerged. He intones to listeners to consider an updated conception of public texts as subject to public processes:

acts of congress and acts of parliament are but signs, and are no less than the things they signify. *They move only as they are moved upon by superior force.* The power behind the throne is ever greater than the throne itself. Take the obedient hands of the watch. They tell us the time of day, but they tell us nothing of the moving power behind them. The action of the English government and that of our own, in respect to the abolition of slavery, *was due to the creation of a purer moral sentiment* in both countries than had ever prevailed.<sup>108</sup>

Once Douglass establishes a cause of emancipation is “ever greater than the occasion,” and that “the thing explained is greater than the explanation,” he has woven a relationship between text and agency assigned to popular will: governments may have acted to abolish slavery, but such achievements only grew from the “moral sentiment” directing political action.

This relationship is not only based on popular will alone, however. Douglass acknowledges the role of British West Indian emancipation in the creation of American liberation of slaves, but goes further to define the 1863 act as more than a war measure; he reconstitutes the source by which the measure was introduced. Those who are “superficial and thoughtless” would suggest “abolition of slavery was due to the war only.”<sup>109</sup> The true source of the Emancipation Proclamation—war measure or not—was the execution of the “moral and human judgment of the nation,” an application of principle which had “gotten itself inwrought and established in the public mind and

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<sup>108</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 197, *emphasis mine*.

<sup>109</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 198.

heart.”<sup>110</sup> Lincoln’s emancipation can be his own, Douglass claims, but his “act of war was the flower,” which only grew up from “soil, root, and sap” laid by the “labors of the earlier abolition men and women, who, with voice and pen, unmasked the hell-black horrors of slavery,” shocked public opinion, and created the context wherein the nation was faced with “abolition or dismemberment.”<sup>111</sup> Lincoln is the central figure of an *agent-act* ratio. The hidden nectar of history, Douglass reminds his listeners, is the presence of two preceding ratios: the *agency-scene* ratio comprising abolitionists who directed the public sentiment of emancipation, and thereby building the framework which enabled Lincoln’s *act* to originate. This, Douglass intones, was the *agency* of the agitators, or the “power behind the throne” applicable to both countries (The United States and England), and either text (West Indian Emancipation and the Emancipation Proclamation).<sup>112</sup>

Douglass’s rhetorical position offers a remarkable relationship between public activism and the life of the text. The Emancipation Proclamation was limited, conditional, and ultimately recognized for its effectiveness. To focus on the supposed effects of this decree would be to force a relationship between audience and text unsupported by circumstance, experience, and future prospects. The Emancipation Proclamation’s *origin*, however, remains a rich new point of focus. Lincoln wrote the words, while agents of the public sentiment *created the context around which an act of war became a necessity*. For Emancipation to be born a reality, Douglass reasons, it had

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<sup>110</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 198.

<sup>111</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 199.

<sup>112</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 199.

to be born of “the moral conviction implanted in the national mind and heart by abolition speakers and writers.” By this logic, he continues, the text, is more than just a war measure: if its purpose was to end the war, it would cease to be effective upon the war’s completion.<sup>113</sup> Alternatively, the Emancipation Proclamation was born from public support. Its existence in the present, however, is sorely lacking—liberty is “delusive, transient, and worthless”—but its existence is also not reducible to a single instant.<sup>114</sup> To know the virtues of emancipation and the document that is represented in the day, Douglass continues, is to know emancipation exists beyond “an isolated movement” as “part of that eternal and universal conflict everywhere in progress between human justice, enlightenment, and goodness on the one hand, and human pride, selfishness, injustice, and tyrannical power on the other,” and that will continue “forever” until man can “become subject to his higher and better nature.”<sup>115</sup>

Douglass concludes his address in Rochester by reminding listeners that events that created the context through which emancipation emerged are close at hand: “the past is not dead, and cannot die,” further stating, “we are walking, to-day, by the light of lamps trimmed and furnished us by those who have gone before us, and should stumble worse than we do now, but for those lamps.”<sup>116</sup> Though blacks are “still on trial,” Douglass reminds listeners, the example of the antislavery movement stands as reason to hope: “Something must come after freedom.”<sup>117</sup> The pressures and constraints approaching blacks in 1885, Douglass concludes, are exceptionally challenging: the

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<sup>113</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 199.

<sup>114</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 200.

<sup>115</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 200.

<sup>116</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 201.

<sup>117</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 206.

emancipated class “was, and is” faced with conditions “so unfavorable to success,” and yet must continue to “strive to decrease that distance” that separates race quality in post-Reconstruction America.<sup>118</sup> Instead of testing its effectiveness in a time of rescinding civil rights, or attempting to draw a forced relationship between the legalistic words of the text and its resulting impact on advancing human freedom, Douglass positions the Emancipation Proclamation in the middle of the audience’s cultural narrative: the text is both the result of agitation efforts and the model of what can be possible again in an age that requires reform for the promise of equality to live.

Though his 1885 address to citizens in Rochester came nearly forty years after he began speaking to August First commemorations, Frederick Douglass’s speech accomplishes something significant in the context of ceremonial repetition and the exchange between the text repeated and the accompanying discourse. He reimagined the Emancipation Proclamation as belonging to no one individual, but as originating from the active public scene in which it was born. In Kenneth Burke’s sense of rhetorical theory agents direct the scene, and through their efforts, the scene directed the act. Memory of the Emancipation Proclamation—directing and constraining the new life of the text in ceremonial repetition—is consubstantial with the communal memory of protest, agitation, and public involvement. Douglass appealed to active citizenship, and imbued them with the agency of such influence. With this, Douglass turns this example to the needs of the present, namely, an unfulfilled commitment to freedom and the challenges of citizenship that require attention from the African American themselves.

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<sup>118</sup> Douglass, “Great Britain’s Example is High, Noble, and Grand,” 208.

This step not only inscribes a broader spectrum of voices to the memory of the document, but in so doing it helps to bring Lincoln's legalistic prose in the epideictic presence of shared remembrance: past actions, like ours, can revive the eternal process of making real the virtues of the text for the cause of human liberty. Douglass's achievement can be summarized in a strange yet effective argument: By reducing the Emancipation Proclamation to nothing but a "sign" that was required to be *signified*, he deepened the relation between public and text, and added substance to its meaning. To rescue the Emancipation Proclamation from obscurity meant to minimize its iconic status against the wave of public participation.

## CONCLUSION

What does Frederick Douglass's rhetoric of August First celebrations tell us about ceremonial repetition? Three conclusions are essential. First, Douglass's keynote speeches reinforce the importance of public address as a vital source of extensional constitutive meaning of texts remembered. The character of the Emancipation Proclamation, though repeated in seemingly rote fashion, was imbued with different rhetorical strategies across three separate locations. Douglass's early *purpose-act* ratio in the Melinda speech is eventually replaced with an *agent-act* ratio, replacing Lincoln with abolitionist protesters. Finally, his 1885 address in Rochester offers the unique *agency-act* ratio as the dominant means of commemorating Lincoln's text. Such a transition means that Douglass evolved in his memorialization of the text, first attributing the text to a mystical source, then to a sense of materialism, and finally, a pragmatic philosophy that invests the text's origin and consequence with the actions of

public participants.<sup>119</sup> It is this final ratio of remembering the Emancipation Proclamation that allows for the fluid understanding of the text as not only an evolving substance of public ideas, but as the *result* of an evolving substance of public ideas.

Second, analysis of the extensional constitutive of the Emancipation Proclamation in Frederick Douglass's August First orations offers a departure on the conventional understanding of how the Emancipation Proclamation is remembered. Placed in the context of celebrating the international history of emancipation, the 1863 proclamation inherits a broader history, and, by comparison with the British emancipation, either gains or loses reputation based on the contemporary political standing of African American liberty. By continuing the habit of repetition outside the designated date of remembrance, the terrain is already prepared to invite a comparison or to formulate a history between the two countries that may not be evident when focusing on a January 1<sup>st</sup> celebration alone. Even more, lodging the 1863 text within August First shifts attention away from the traditional source of remembrance: Abraham Lincoln. In her overview of nineteenth-century emancipation celebrations, Leslie A. Schwalm describes how the Emancipation Proclamation was not only a "persistent" element of commemoration, but that reading the text was almost always a means to of "portraying

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<sup>119</sup> The public philosophies and their corresponding points of the pentad are covered in Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 127-317; as well as Bernard L. Brock, "Rhetorical Criticism: A Burkeian Approach," in *Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Perspective, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, eds, Bernard L. Brock and Robert L. Scott (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980): 349-360.

Lincoln as a great emancipator.”<sup>120</sup> Analysis of Douglass’s August First oratory offers a different history of the text, and a different application of its memory.<sup>121</sup>

Third, analysis of the invocations of texts within moments of ceremonial repetition highlights—in this case—the greater potential of texts as memories contrasted with their original form. Lincoln’s decree is a unique case for understanding the creative possibilities of ceremonial repetition simply because publics inheriting the words of the Emancipation Proclamation are left with such little intrinsic content. As Harold Holzer has recently argued, one reason why commemorative prints celebrating the 1863 text were slow to emerge was because the text “fail[ed] to inspire such depictions.”<sup>122</sup> The public virtues Lincoln chose to exclude—either by prudent political decision or reasonable hesitation—could not be rescued in memory from repetition alone, but *could* be molded in public appeals attuned to a listening audience ready to experience and consider the text anew. Though divergent in form and content across multiple occasions, Douglass’s keynote speeches provide a tentative way in which to understand the connection between ceremonial repetition and the epideictic emphasis on public virtue.

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<sup>120</sup> Leslie A. Schwalm, “‘Agonizing Groans of Mothers’ and Slave-Scarred Veterans’: The Commemoration of Slavery and Emancipation,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 9 (September 2008), 293.

<sup>121</sup> For a contrasting memory of the text, consider Douglass’s remarks during a commemoration of twentieth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1883. Douglass defines the proclamation as that text “by Abraham Lincoln; a proclamation which made the name of its author immortal and glorious throughout the civilized world. That great act of his marked an epoch in the life of the whole American nation.” Lincoln, “the great statesman by whom he was supported,” helped the government “become consistent, logical and strong, for from this hour slavery was doomed, liberty made certain and the Union established.” See: Frederick Douglass, “Freedom Has Brought Duties: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 1 January 1883,” in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, Volume 5: 1881-1895*, eds. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 56-57.

<sup>122</sup> Harold Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln: The Proclamation in Text, Context, and Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 135.

By inviting his audience to see themselves as part of the agency by which a text was born, he also invites a renewed appreciation for the virtues within the text repeated. Repetition is not ceremonial ornamentation, but is instead a way of knowing the model for the community to replicate through action, maintaining Hauser's observation that audiences interact with notions of public morality through "*mimesis* of deeds unfathomable were they not publicly exhibited and validated."<sup>123</sup> By reinscribing the virtue that bred the text—public involvement—listeners can encounter a text with a newfound appreciation of its ethical quality not originally intended by the author. Douglass's rhetoric illustrates an effective way public address can mingle with ceremonial repetition, and provide a framework wherein texts "merge with a total situation to convey meaning."<sup>124</sup> Re-reading the text in this way provides valuable insight into how audiences were invited to reimagine their engagement with the living legacy of public discourse.

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<sup>123</sup> Hauser, "Aristotle on Epideictic: The Formation of Public Morality" *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29, number 1 (Winter 1999), 19.

<sup>124</sup> Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word*, 116.



CHAPTER IV

REPETITION, “REBEL FLAGS,” AND THE UNION IMAGE OF WASHINGTON’S  
FAREWELL ADDRESS

*The dialectic of word and image seems to be a constant in the fabric of signs that a culture weaves around itself. What varies is the precise nature of the weave, the relation of warp and woof.*  
—W. J. T. Mitchell.<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCTION: IMAGES, LIFE, AND DEATH

Rhetoric can mean the difference between life and death. In his book *The Edge of Meaning*, James Boyd White reminds listeners that speech can alter perceptions of mortality: the dead “are only dead if we fail to give them life.”<sup>2</sup> Rhetorical life and physical life are distinct. However, as recent contributions to public address scholarship from James Jasinski and Jennifer Merceica remind us, the constitutive character of speech travels in more than one direction, and the life of reading is an expansive process. Authors create relationships through public texts. Audiences, Jasinski states, “appropriate, articulate, circulate, and/or subvert these textual forms in ways that release and transform their potential constitutive energy.”<sup>3</sup> Studying what Jasinski and

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<sup>1</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 43.

<sup>2</sup> James Boyd White, *The Edge of Meaning* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), xiv.

<sup>3</sup> James Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography: Toward an Understanding of the Discursive (Re)constitution of ‘Constitution’ in *The Federalist Papers*” in Kathleen Turner (ed), *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 75.

Merceica have called the “extensional” character of rhetoric means accounting for a text’s life, or how later publics make the dead—and their discourse—live again.<sup>4</sup>

As I have argued thus far, ceremonial repetition is an ideal beginning point to study the extensional constitutive life of public address. The previous chapter uncovered how the prescribed epideictic meaning of a text repeated can be constrained and characterized by public address. Memorializing the Emancipation Proclamation was a fluid process for Frederick Douglass, and one that positioned the text in relation to a range of different relations to the community of listening audiences. Speech is perhaps the most fundamental form by which scholars can study the extensional lives of public texts. Yet, scholars and practitioners of rhetoric have yearned to understand the role of sight and vision as means to engage the imaginations of audiences. *Ekphrasis*, Webb reminds us, resides in the “the interaction between language, memory[,] and imagination.”<sup>5</sup> Citing Thucydides’ historical writings, Webb hypothesizes the relationship *ekphrasis* creates between text and audience: “the text opens up to the reader’s imagination: the words on the page dissolve into images as they impact upon the mind.”<sup>6</sup> Ceremonial repetition is an ideal environment to explore the connection between speech and imagination even further.

Webb’s description of *ekphrasis* reads like a mystical phenomenon: ideas anchored to text wrestle gravity’s weight, enter the consciousness, and become translated

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<sup>4</sup> See: James Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography,” and also James Jasinski and Jennifer Mercieca, “Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the ‘Principles of ‘98’” in Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (eds), *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 313-342.

<sup>5</sup> Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham, Surrey [England]: Ashgate, 2009), 195.

<sup>6</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion*, 195.

into an image. Images, memory, and rhetoric are fundamentally intertwined. Aristotle's oft-quoted terms *topoi* and *loci* refer to "subject matter of dialectic" and "the places in which they were stored," linking memory to the production of images.<sup>7</sup> Imagining public address is possible, moreover, in the sense that a text becomes literally re-imagined before the viewer's eyes through representative symbolism. Such expressive illustrations accompany the form of rhetorical invention eloquently defined by Francis Bacon as the effort to "*draw forth or call before us that which may be pertinent to the purpose which we take into our consideration,*" rather than something wholly new.<sup>8</sup> For Bacon, rhetoric applied "*Reason to Imagination* for the better moving of the will," and helps us understand how the iteration of a text invites a way of witnessing a familiar text in a new way.<sup>9</sup> Visualization, as Longinus summarized in his work "On the Sublime," arises when you "imagine you are actually seeing the subject of your description, and bring it before the eyes of your audience."<sup>10</sup> This study contributes to our understanding of how ceremonial repetition maintains and alters the traditional effect of vividly generating ideas attributed to *ekphrasis*: words repeated merge with literal images of communal remembrance. The public memory of the text is visualized within the context of repetition. Formal recitations of public discourse are one way of imagining a text through performance. Whence illustrated or conveyed visually, audiences have the

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<sup>7</sup> Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 46; According to Aristotle, memory resides in the same part of the soul "to which imagination belongs," meaning that perceptions of the past do not arise without an accompanying image. Aristotle quoted in Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 49.

<sup>8</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, in Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (eds), *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present, Second Edition* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St.Martin's, 2001), 740.

<sup>9</sup> Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, 741.

<sup>10</sup> Longinus [trans. Penelope Murray and T.S. Dorsch], "On the Sublime," as printed in *Classical Literary Criticism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000 [1965]), 133.

opportunity to reimagine a text through its formal or informal display. Countless studies and theories of rhetoric, some previewed in the first chapter, describe the power of language with bringing a vivid image to an audience's imagination. This chapter considers a historical example of something different: the epideictic visualization of public address through popular iconology.

The intersection between images and the representation of rhetorical texts carries a long history. Thomas Nast's 1868 print titled "Patience on a Monument" displayed the helpless condition of a black Union veteran against the cultural terrorism of post-Civil War racism. The impact of displaying this social condition carries greater effect when viewers note that the man is clutching a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation. In sight, the advancement of African American freedom is heretofore unfulfilled.<sup>11</sup> Once thought instrumental to lifting the man's condition and striking a blow to national slavery, Nast imagines Lincoln's decree with a monument-sized list of abuses against African Americans that crystalizes a new norm of race relations. Threats and dangers have replaced the promise of freedom. Like the illustrations and monuments mentioned in the previous chapter, Nast's imaging of the text participates in the process of re-imagining the text by audiences—or illustrators—to embody new constitutive meaning.

Nast's image is a dramatization of a text in the world. However, visual journalism has played a unique role in documenting ceremonial repetition and widening the prospective audience witnessing the act—and meaning—of reading. Unlike the deliberative judgment of a text in Nast's imaging of the Emancipation Proclamation,

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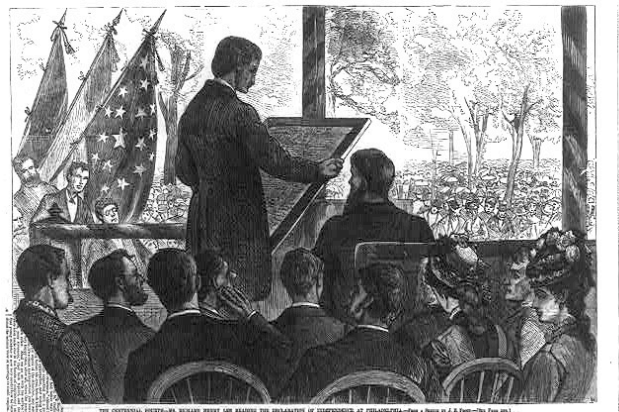
<sup>11</sup> "Patience on a Monument," by Thomas Nast, printed in *Harper's Weekly*, 10 October 1868, p.648.

illustrations provided distanced readers with what might be called a visual snapshot of repetition in progress. The 1876 Fourth of July centennial celebration in Philadelphia provides a useful example of this practice. Richard Henry Lee's public reading of the Declaration of Independence brought the written text into public form with significant symbolic overtures. Lee, the grandson of Henry Lee—author of the 2 July 1776 resolution of the Continental Congress that declared the American colonies independent states—was an ideal choice to personify the revered document a century later. His rendering of the text exemplified the life of reading within the context of commemoration. The illustration of his iteration, however, exemplified the importance of detail in bringing the act of recital into visual form through newspapers of the time [See Figure 1 and 2].

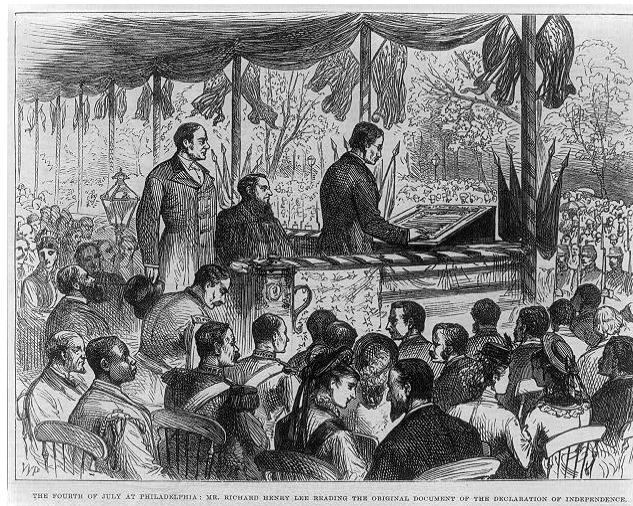
Readers of two different newspapers—*Harper's Weekly* and *London Illustrated News*—were invited into the process of commemorating via the act of witnessing. Susan Sontag's observation on modern photography is equally applicable to the nineteenth-century print illustration: it is one of "the principal devices for experiencing something, for giving an appearance of participation."<sup>12</sup> The interaction of Jefferson's original words and the public sentiment of the Reconstruction era is given an additional layer of extensional meaning in how the act of reading is publicly imagined in epideictic practice. Yet, the presentation of Lee's recital is depicted through two visions of remembrance for respective readers.

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<sup>12</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 10.



**FIGURE 1** “The Centennial Fourth—Mr. Richard Henry Lee Reading the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia.” This image was published in *Harper’s Weekly*, 22 July 1876.<sup>13</sup> Image courtesy of U.S. Library of Congress.



**FIGURE 2** “Richard Henry Lee reading the original document of the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July 1876, at Philadelphia.” This image was published in the *London Illustrated News*, 29 July 1876.<sup>14</sup> Image courtesy of U.S. Library of Congress.

<sup>13</sup> Frost, J. B., “The Centennial Fourth—Mr. Richard Henry Lee Reading the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia.” Wood Engraving. *Harper’s Weekly*, July 22, 1876. From Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Web. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006675556/> (accessed on 1 January 2012).

<sup>14</sup> “Richard Henry Lee reading the original document of the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July, 1876, at Philadelphia.” Wood Engraving. London. *Illustrated News of London*, July 29 1876. From Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Web. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006677412/> (accessed on 1 January 2012).

The *London Illustrated News* portrays a scene that includes a bi-racial audience of the text, accented with the decorous American flags to boot, a departure from the scene depicted in *Harper's Weekly* that is comparatively confined and limited. What does the Declaration of Independence mean after one hundred years? Two images of the same event produce different images remembered for posterity.

In the remainder of this chapter, I present readers with a rich historical case study to bring greater detail and depth to the importance of visual images and ceremonial repetition. Though the illustrations described above indicate ways of tracing common or contested themes between public discourse and its evaluation in sight, the analysis that follows suggests the stronger claim that print illustrations—when coupled with ceremonial repetition and discernable habits of seeing—can represent the public virtue emphasized in ceremonial repetition in a visual representation. Though this analysis brings readers back to the mid-nineteenth century, the object of analysis is a departure from the methods of study in chapter three. Whereas the Emancipation Proclamation is largely bereft of eloquence or discernable exaltations of public virtue, the text central to this chapter, George Washington's 1796 Farewell Address, reads like a guide to public citizenship. Unlike the August First celebrations wherein Douglass's emphasis and characterization of the Emancipation Proclamation ebbed and flowed over time, the contest over the memory of Washington—and to large degree, his Farewell message—was pulled in antithetical directions as Confederate and Union sensibilities sought to reconcile the meaning of the nation, the man, and the text.

## THE PRESENCE OF WASHINGTON: 22 FEBRUARY 1862

For George Washington's 1796 Farewell Address, no moment of rhetorical history was more enlivening than 22 February 1862. In the U.S. capital the occasion mirrored a presidential inauguration, with both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court, various heads of departments, and military personnel cloistered in the House gallery to hear Secretary of the Senate John Forney's recursive revival of George Washington's 1796 Farewell Address.<sup>15</sup> Attention to Washington's text wasn't limited to Congress. Outside the pomp of this textual remembrance, recitals of Washington's revered text commenced in a multitude of public gatherings throughout the Northern urban landscape. In the Confederate capital of Richmond, moreover, February 22<sup>nd</sup> was a day of both remembrance of Washington and inauguration of nationalism. Jefferson Davis and members of a new congress of the Confederate States of America took respective oaths beneath the gaze of the first Founding Father frozen in monumental bronze. Davis's second inaugural speech likened the birth of Washington to the birth of a permanent Southern government: "The date, the memory, and the purpose seem fitly associated," David mused.<sup>16</sup> After ten months of American Civil War the politics of commemoration reflected an endurance of what David Potter called the "riddle of *pluribus* or *unum*," and the memory of Washington—as advocate of republican union and original revolutionary rebel—remained in flux under the pull of bilocation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "Joint Sessions" of Congress are rare. See: The Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives, "Joint Meetings, Joint Session, and Inaugurations."

[[http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/house\\_history/Joint\\_Meetings/jointAll.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/Joint_Meetings/jointAll.html)] on 1 September 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Jefferson Davis, "Inaugural Address as Elected President, February 22, 1862," in *Jefferson Davis: The Essential Writings*, ed, William J. Cooper, Jr. (New York: The Modern Library, 2004), 224.

<sup>17</sup> David Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*, 484.



The ceremony in Richmond embraced symbolic continuity.<sup>18</sup> In the city of his namesake, however, remembrance of Washington attempted to reconcile the contest of national identity with contrasting icons symbolic of a nation torn apart. This rhetoric was both seen and heard. Following the Chaplain's prayer and Secretary Forney's enlivening of the Farewell Address, the event closed with a presentation of "[f]lags captured from the Rebels to those in attendance."<sup>19</sup> Two weeks later *Harper's Weekly*, an illustrated newspaper sympathetic to the Union cause reported the private event to the public in its traditional combination of political reporting and illustration.<sup>20</sup> The story discussed the ceremonial repetition in detail, including the guests in attendance to the reading, and the closing cheers delivered to Union General George B. McClellan. Upon leaving the Old House of Representatives, audience members perused the display of confiscated flags. By sight, however, readers were introduced to the event through an illustration of flags derived from a sketch by Alfred R. Waud printed in *Harper's Weekly* as "Rebel Flags in the Old House of Representatives in Washington" [See Figures 3 and 4].<sup>21</sup> Such practices of declamation and display seem peculiar and historically remote

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<sup>18</sup> Confederate efforts to forge continuity between the Founding Father and the new nation were substantial. In addition to a speech by Jefferson Davis that explicitly tied the new nation to Washington's birthday, Washington's image was extended to the currency of the Southern republic, and also represented on the official emblem of the Confederate States of America. See: "Jefferson Davis's Second Inaugural Address," and George H. Shirk, "The Great Seal of the Confederacy." *Chronicles of Oklahoma (Oklahoma Historical Society)* 30 (1952): 309. Accessed from [http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/v030/v030p309pdf] on 10 April 2010.

<sup>19</sup> "Congress Washington's Birthday Celebration, Thursday, February 20, 1862" (Printed Order). Available through *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*, Series 1. General Correspondence, 1833-1916 (Washington, D.C.: American Memory Project [2000-2002]), [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:2:/temp/~ammem\\_AxLG::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:2:/temp/~ammem_AxLG::) [accessed 1 September 2010].

<sup>20</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines: 1850-1865* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1938), 474.

<sup>21</sup> It is unclear how much authorial control Waud had in the design of "Rebel Flags." Though he is credited with providing the "sketch" for *Harper's Weekly*, his work during the Civil War is also generally

against contemporary norms of remembrance. Yet, performances of the text speak to a larger effort to affirm ties between Washington and the Union cause, rebuke the legitimacy of the Confederacy, and fuse the memory of Washington's Farewell Address with the symbolism of the American flag.

No moment during the Civil War—or perhaps even the nineteenth-century—matched the amount of coordinated effort to preserving both an attachment to Washington and a national identity. Events of 22 February 1862 accent the dueling frames of remembrance and also invite analysis on multiple rhetorical texts across different arguments, locals, and constituted publics. To clarify the scope of this study, I focus on the interaction between ceremonial repetition and the accompanying image of confiscated flags distributed to the public. The *Harper's Weekly* image and the widespread nature of repetition invite a shared focus: the illustration of confiscated flags publically displayed an image of remembrance representative of the common act of repetition. Indeed, no photograph or daguerreotype of the moment exists. As observers in the present we are in the same position as the reading public of 1862: the *Harper's Weekly* image constitutes the moment [See Figure 3 and 4]. The image doesn't merely show the reality of the ceremony, but helps to "create" reality within a political context.<sup>22</sup> The complexity of Civil War rhetoric is well represented in public address

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described as "providing the picture for the engravers' tools." The extent to which his original sketch "Captured Flags in the O" and the final copy of "Rebel Flags" are by the same author remains uncertain. See: Frederic E. Ray, *Alfred R. Waud: Civil War Artist* (New York: The Viking Press, 1974), 33 and 52.

<sup>22</sup> Kevin Michael DeLuca and Anne Teresa Demo suggest that the vital function of images is to constitute the dominant perceptions that organize perspectives of a debate. See: "Imaging Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17 (2000): 242.

studies.<sup>23</sup> Less clear is our understanding of how arguments of nationality took form in popular texts such as newsprint and widespread ceremonies of repetition.<sup>24</sup> This investigation contributes a greater understanding of Civil War rhetoric by showing how ways of arguing for Union nationalism translated into commemorative ways of seeing Union nationalism in formal and popular texts alike.

Conventional wisdom credits Lincoln with rhetorically preserving the Union throughout the war by arguing for its permanence, as reflected in his reading of America's founding era.<sup>25</sup> Yet the variety of messages reinforcing this view of national identity has remained largely elusive for rhetorical scholars.<sup>26</sup> How was the idea of

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<sup>23</sup> For Lincoln's Civil War public address in particular, one might consider the following: Marie Hochmuth Nichols, "Lincoln's First Inaugural," in *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism, a Twentieth Century Perspective, 2nd Edition* (eds), Bernard Brock and Robert L. Scott (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 73-114; Kirt Wilson, "The Paradox of Lincoln's Freedom Legacy: The Emancipation Proclamation and the Meaning of Rhetorical Leadership," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 3 (2000): 15-32; Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America* (New York: Simon & Schuster), 1992 as well as Edwin Black, "Gettysburg and Silence," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (1994), 21-36; Several analyses on the second inaugural can be found in a special issue of *Communication Reports* (Winter 1988). See: David Zarefsky, "Approaching Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address," 9-13; James Arnt Aune, "Lincoln and the American Sublime," 14-19; Ronald H. Carpenter, "In Not-So-Trivial Pursuit of Rhetorical Wedges," 20-25; Michael Leff, "Dimensions of Temporality in Lincoln's Second Inaugural," 26-31; Martha Solomon, "'With Firmness in the Right': The Creation of Moral Hegemony in Lincoln's Second Inaugural," 32-37.

<sup>24</sup> François Furstenberg mentions the reading of the Farewell Address in 1862 but does not describe the presentation of flags as central to the commemoration. See: "Washington's Farewell Address" in *A New Literary History of America*, eds, Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 122-126. Essential scholarship on the politics of print messages includes: Lester Olson, *Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology* (Columbia, South Carolina: The University of South Carolina Press), 2004; Stephen H. Browne, "'Like Gorey Spectres': Representing Evil in Theodore Weld's *American Slavery As It Is*," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 277-292.

<sup>25</sup> Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America* (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1992; George Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age* (New York: Norton), 1979; for insight to the permanent Union thesis prior to Lincoln's presidency, see: Major Wilson, *Space, Time, and Freedom: The Quest for Nationality and the Irrepressible Conflict, 1815-1861* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press), 1974.

<sup>26</sup> For visual studies on the Civil War, see: Judith Bookbinder and Shelia Gallagher (eds), *First Hand: Civil War Era Drawings from the Becker Collection*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 2009; Mark E. Neely Jr. and Harold Holzer, *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War North* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press), 2000; Kevin G. Barnhurst and John

Union commemorated—and visualized—in public display? In the following essay, I argue that the context of contested identities and intersecting relations of speech and icon around Washington’s 130<sup>th</sup> birthday broadens our understanding as to how the military and rhetorical contest between Unionist and Confederate ideologies took form in popular texts and commemorations. Through an analysis of public recitations of the Farewell Address and the visual illustration of flags in *Harper’s Weekly*, I suggest that part of the process of affirming Unionism in early 1862 was to visualize the public memory of Washington’s Farewell Address in an emblematic display of Civil War flags, an intersection of text and icon.<sup>27</sup> “Rebel Flags” represents a visual artifact that unites the two most contested symbols of early Civil War rhetoric: the memory of Washington and national banners. More than a bridge between common topics, the illustration is a nineteenth-century artifact of what W. J. T. Mitchell has called an “imagetext,” or a “suturing” of discourse and icon.<sup>28</sup> In the pages that follow, I elaborate on the implications of “Rebel Flags” as a ceremonial window commemorating the Farewell Address. The image is significant for its hybrid quality: the same logic of perpetual Unionism that permeated the memory of the Farewell Address and its widespread repetition in early 1862 seeps into the symbolic representation of flags in print form.

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Nerone, “Civic Picturing vs. Realist Photojournalism: The Regime of Illustrated News, 1856-1901,” *Design Issues* 16 (Spring 2000): 65

<sup>27</sup> François Furstenberg mentions the original reading of the “Farewell Address” in 1862 but not the presentation of flags as central to the commemoration. See: “Washington’s Farewell Address” in *A New Literary History of America*, edited by Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 122-126. Previous scholarship on the politics of print messages include: Lester Olson, *Benjamin Franklin’s Vision of American Community: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology* (Columbia, South Carolina: The University of South Carolina Press), 2004; Stephen H. Browne, “‘Like Gorey Spectres’: Representing Evil in Theodore Weld’s *American Slavery As It Is*,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 277-292.

<sup>28</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 94.

Taken together, we see “Rebel Flags” not only as a display of contested emblems that *visualizes* Washington’s birthday, but more importantly as a visual mirror of the public memory of his Farewell Address.

To underscore the importance of the occasion, the illustration, and the implications of my above observations, I address the following points. First, I provide readers with a broader sense of the Farewell Address and its contested history prior to the 1862 readings. Second, I provide observations on the interrelations of discourse and icons, particularly the presumptions of Mitchell’s imagetext. Third, I address the distinctive public memory that predominated public and political messages regarding Washington’s farewell. Next, I review the visual symbolism of flags during the Civil War, noting the enthymematic potentials of representing emblems in newsprint, and the journalistic norms of display that informed such practices. Finally, I connect the memorializing of Washington throughout the public writ large to the aesthetic representation of flags in the *Harper’s Weekly*, arguing that a symbolic convergence of the Farewell Address and “Rebel Flags” is an imagetext that visualizes the ideology of perpetual Unionism in popular print while contributing to the extensional life for the Farewell Address in visual form.



**FIGURE 3** “The Captured Flags in the O.” This sketch was drawn by Alfred Randolph Waud, 1862.<sup>29</sup>

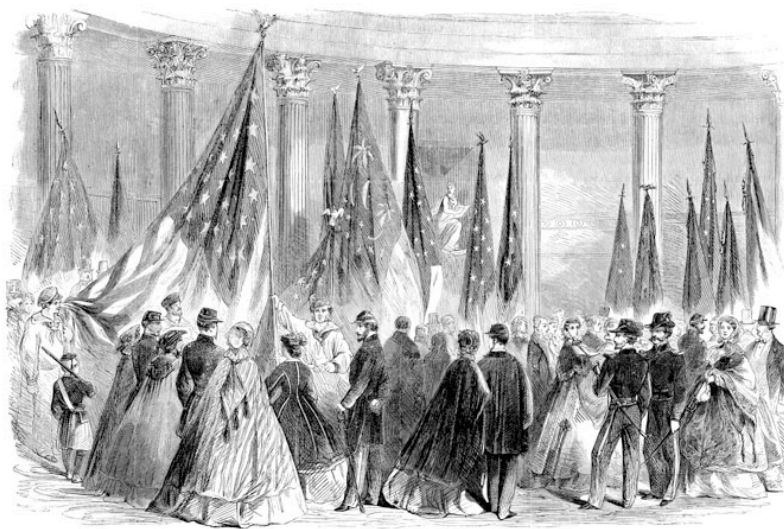


Image courtesy harpersweekly.com

**FIGURE 4** “Rebel Flags In The Old House Of Representatives In Washington.” The illustration of flags was printed with news of the commemorative reading of the Farwell Address in 1862. The engraving was printed in *Harper’s Weekly*, 8 March 1862. Image courtesy of harpersweek.com.

<sup>29</sup> Image courtesy of U.S. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Web. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.21241/> (Accessed on 1 February 2013).

## SPEAKING, SEEING, AND REMEMBERING

Sight, memory, and rhetoric have been intrinsically intertwined since antiquity. Memory, Aristotle observed, resides in the same part of the soul “to which imagination belongs,” meaning that humans do not remember without also producing images.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the range of scholarship confronting the intersection of speech and images is growing. Lawrence Prelli’s volume *Rhetorics of Display* highlights the longstanding propensity of theorists such as Chaïm Perelman and Kenneth Burke to invoke metaphorical language of “presence,” or “terministic screens” to convey argumentative strategies through visual terminology.<sup>31</sup> Lester Olson’s work on eighteenth-century iconology has expanded the modes in which we apply concepts of speech to visual artifacts: Visual and verbal messages share what Olson calls “a commitment to use a community’s representational systems in endeavors to enlist the will of an audience.”<sup>32</sup> Our understanding of how words and images converge and affect one another has produced scholarship attentive to visual-verbal intersections. “Rhetorical studies of display,” Prelli summarizes, includes “the verbal depiction of the visual and the visual depiction of the verbal.”<sup>33</sup>

The precise point at which verbal and visual messages intersect is not authoritatively certain. Verbally capturing a visual experience seems impossible given

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<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, “On Memory and Recollection,” in *Aristotle on Memory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, edited and translated by Richard Sorabji (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 49.

<sup>31</sup> Lawrence Prelli, “Rhetorics of Display,” in *Rhetorics of Display*, ed, Prelli (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 7-12; Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tytecha, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame, Indiana, 2008 [1969], 116; Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1966), 45.

<sup>32</sup> Lester C. Olson, “Benjamin Franklin’s Pictorial Representations of the British Colonies in America: A Study in Iconology” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 18.

<sup>33</sup> Prelli, “Rhetorics of Display,” 12.

the basic division of human senses. At certain junctures, W. J. T. Mitchell has claimed, the intersection of visual and verbal messages fuse together and constitute meaning from one another. He further stresses that the “fabric of signs” constituting a relation between image and speech is not determined with finality: it is a variant process, depending on what he defines as “the precise nature of the weave, the relation of warp and woof.”<sup>34</sup> Mitchell’s foremost contribution to understanding the relational weaving of sight and speech resides in his term “imagetext.” Simply stated, an imagetext occurs within “synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text.”<sup>35</sup> This “narrative suturing of verbal and visual” happens, Mitchell claims, inasmuch as texts work to “speak for (or to) the photographs,” while photos “exemplify, clarify, ground, and document the text.”<sup>36</sup> Mitchell suggests the distinction between words and pictures is never as absolute as we might originally suspect. Regardless, the imagetext remains a useful tool for both analyzing and expanding how visual and verbal texts are woven together. As Robin E. Jensen has summarized, the utility of the imagetext is the overlapping nature in which we encounter messages: a “text is usually accompanied by associative image, and, more often than not, text and images are presented together.”<sup>37</sup>

Though pre-dating the combination of image and text found in sophisticated print and video advertisements, “Rebel Flags” represents a new relational dimension of

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<sup>34</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology*, 43.

<sup>35</sup> Mitchell’s use of this term is varied: “I will employ the typographic convention of the slash to designate ‘image/text’ as a problematic gap, cleavage, or rupture in representation. The term ‘imagetext’ designates composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text. ‘Image-text’ with a hyphen designates *relations* of the visual and verbal.” See: *Picture Theory*, 89n9 (*emphasis* in original).

<sup>36</sup> Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 94.

<sup>37</sup> Robin E. Jensen, “The Eating Disordered Lifestyle: Imagetexts and the Performance of Similitude” *Argumentation & Advocacy* 42 (Summer 2005): 4.



imagetexts by virtue of the commemorative context from which it emerges. The key to unlocking the importance of this illustration resides in the dual function of print journalism to both visualize the news and bring a vision of commemoration before the eyes in communal remembrance. As Ned O’Gorman has noted, Aristotle’s conception of *phantasia*—which included processes of remembering, imagining, visualizing, and dreaming—provides an important vitality to the role of mental images in public discourse.<sup>38</sup> Specifically O’Gorman claims that epideictic occasions are designed to provide “images of various and disparate values for public observation and, perhaps, deliberation.”<sup>39</sup> In other words, discourse brings images into the public consciousness through epideictic commemoration.

“Rebel Flags,” by slight contrast, supplies to readers a viewpoint of common commemoration (repeating the Farewell Address) through the familiar public grammar of flags familiar to readers. The suturing between image and text emerges not only from a simultaneous encounter between word and picture, but also from the display of flags visually representing commemoration of a text repeated. The intersection of public remembrance and illustrated journalism, in other words, represents the dual function of “Rebel Flags” for the ceremonial observances two weeks prior. The *Harper’s Weekly* rendering of flags in the Old House of Representatives publicized and altered a key symbol of nationality within the visual grammar of flags. To grasp the importance of this symbolic arrangement and display, however, we must first account for the unique

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<sup>38</sup> Ned O’Gorman, “Aristotle’s *Phantasia* in the *Rhetoric*: Lexis, Appearance, and the Epideictic Function of Discourse.” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 38 (2005): 17 and 21.

<sup>39</sup> O’Gorman, “Aristotle’s *Phantasia* in the *Rhetoric*,” 34-35.

mode of remembering that “Rebel Flags” visualized. Instead of depicting a moment removed from a reader’s experience, such as a distant battle or political skirmish, “Rebel Flags” displayed an event defined by substantial public participation around a common object: Washington’s Farewell Address. The imagetext is an ideal concept to account for the repetition of a text. The mass iteration(s) of a text—such as the Farewell Address in 1862—was an opportunity to *reimagine* a text as public memory. It is important, however, to explore the larger detail of Washington’s text as an enduring document. Since both this chapter and the following study include the extensional life of Washington’s Farewell Address, a brief summary to its intricacies and resulting contestations of meaning is a helpful step preceding analysis.

#### THE FAREWELL ADDRESS AS ENDURING TESTAMENT

George Washington’s Farewell Address is a powerful document of American political discourse, possessing enduring dexterity and applicability beyond its original context. Given broad range of topics covered in the text, the Farewell Address has maintained relevance through its application to different debates and issues of national principle since first being published in *Claypoole’s American Daily Advertiser* on 19 September 1796. In this brief overview of the document, I highlight public reverence to Washington’s 1796 text as a political testament to his historical legacy, briefly explore the major themes of the text and resulting debates, and, finally, provide insight to the relevancy of Washington’s Farewell Address in the years leading up to the American Civil War and the orchestrated commemoration of 1862.

Moses gave the Israelites Deuteronomy; Washington gave the Americans his 'Farewell Address.' Following his death in 1799, this popular equation measured the impact of George Washington in the collective American mind. Insomuch as citizens saw their revolutionary struggle as an effort to break free from the "bondage of Great Britain," Washington was appropriately eulogized and admired as the "Moses of America."<sup>40</sup> The role of admired leader was nothing new. Washington's leadership predated American independence: as leader of the Revolutionary Army, Constitutional Convention, and the first President, his role was wholly unique in the because he "presided over the dismantlement of the old order" and ensured a smooth transition to republican government, all the while becoming his "own successor."<sup>41</sup> The Farewell Address wasn't only a conclusion to a presidency, but the finale of twenty years in which Washington was standing "at the helm of the ship of state."<sup>42</sup> The original era giving birth to American time had ceased. Washington's letter declaring his voluntary retirement to private life would explain how "The PEOPLE of the United States" should carry on.

Public reception to the Farewell Address mirrored religious devotion. George Forgie explains the heightened attention resulted from textual intimacy: here "the father was speaking personally."<sup>43</sup> Washington's paternity was evident in both public and private veneration. Following his death in 1799, one eulogist likened encounters with the text to mother's milk for a child: Of the Farewell Address, "Let the infant cherub

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<sup>40</sup> Robert P. Hay, "George Washington: American Moses," *America Quarterly* 2 (1969): 781-782.

<sup>41</sup> Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 45.

<sup>42</sup> Joseph Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 122.

<sup>43</sup> George Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided*, 25.

suck its honey with his earliest sustenance.”<sup>44</sup> Through public reception, the text was considered a founding document, nearly equal in importance to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.<sup>45</sup> By writing his ideals for posterity instead of delivering a formal speech (as he did on other occasions), Washington participated in the eighteenth century tradition of leaving behind a “political testament,” or what Felix Gilbert defined as a “guide to those leaders who will come later.”<sup>46</sup> Preserved as written text, the Farewell Address nonetheless satisfied immediate objectives of Washington’s political constraints while simultaneously articulating the essential principles to define the country’s future. Through close reading and attentive observance, the Farewell Address became what Furstenburg has called a “civic text,” or a document that taught the public “the meaning of citizenship” and “a sense of mutual political obligation.”<sup>47</sup>

As various scholars of public address have demonstrated, Washington drew the lessons for future conduct from the controversies that defined his tenure in office. Campbell and Jamieson note that “Washington argued that during his tenure dangerous alliances had been avoided and the divisive party spirit diminished,” and from these lessons emerged “warnings against the spirit of faction and against permanent alliances with major European powers.”<sup>48</sup> Foreign independence and domestic union are key

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in François Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington’s Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 43.

<sup>45</sup> George Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided*, 25.

<sup>46</sup> Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 100.

<sup>47</sup> Furstenburg, *In the Name of the Father*, 20.

<sup>48</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Presidents Creating the Presidency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 311; Joseph Ellis adds further detail to this point, summarizing how the four years between the major drafts of the Farewell Address held significance for Washington’s public career as partisan tones in Congress and the press criticized his presidency, including early American foreign policy: the Proclamation of Neutrality and the Jay Treaty of 1794 and 1795 respectively. See:

themes of political debate. Indeed, the Farewell Address remained relevant because the “maxims of national conduct” were presented without explicit reference to the contingent issues facing Washington, giving the text a “testamentary power” across time and interpretation.<sup>49</sup> Nineteenth and twentieth-century arguments on foreign policy and isolationism, for example, hinged on interpreting Washington’s warning of foreign alliances, and the question of whether he intended the United States to eventually achieve dominance in the world, or if the eighteenth-century warning against involvement abroad should be read literally divorced from its time and place.<sup>50</sup>

The myriad arguments woven into the Farewell Address—from public education, religion, and foreign alliances—are filtered through what Garry Wills has defined as the text’s “master theme” of national unity.<sup>51</sup> Through children’s early education and political grooming showed attentive respect for the text, the memory and the document were eventually contested possessions. For a short time, political commemoration sought to find middle ground between dueling national ideologies through the memory of Washington, particularly his Farewell Address. Famed-orator Edward Everett’s

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Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 135-136; Other general principles that stemmed from controversy during Washington’s tenure include his advice on reverence to laws in lieu of the Whiskey Rebellion, and the separation of powers in lieu of the controversy in the Congress to turn away from the Jay Treaty. See: Stephen E. Lucas and Susan Zaeske, “George Washington,” in *U.S. Presidents as Orators: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, (ed) Halford Ryan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 15.

<sup>49</sup> Lucas and Zaeske, “George Washington,” 14.

<sup>50</sup> Burton Ira Kaufman, “Introduction,” 9; For a discussion of Woodrow Wilson’s management of Washington’s warning prior to America’s entrance into World War I, see: Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 104-108.

<sup>51</sup> For an overview on texts as political testaments, see: Felix Gilbert, *To The Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 100; Garry Wills has one of several useful overviews on the Farewell Address. See: “Washington’s Farewell Address: An Eighteenth-Century ‘Fireside Chat’” *Chicago Historical Society* 10 (1981): 178; for a recent study on the significance of style in Washington’s Farewell Address, see: Michael J. Hostetler, “Washington’s Farewell Address: Distance as Bane and Blessing,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5 (2002): 393-407.

three-year tour on “The Character of Washington” from 1856-1859 paid close attention to the original 1796 text: “Washington in the flesh is taken from us,” Everett repeated across multiple occasions, “... but his memory remains, and I say, let us [all national regions] hang to his memory.”<sup>52</sup> Such motives were equally prevalent as Henry T. Tuckerman took initiative to forge a public holiday of the first president’s birthday. The move arose as a means to promote “a unanimity of feeling and of rites, which shall fuse and mold into one pervasive emotion the divided hearts of the country.”<sup>53</sup> Tuckerman and others remembered Washington as a “bond of union, a conciliating memory, and a glorious watchword,” who could heal spirits fractured in the tension of antebellum politics.<sup>54</sup> Despite sectionalism, Michael Kammen has noted, “the Civil War was a stimulus to nationalism, both North *and* South,”<sup>55</sup> which resulted in Washington’s image and memory often being applied to divergent endgames within single debates.

Could a memory of Washington survive the Civil War? Paul Nagel has argued that the Civil War was clear proof that “American had never agreed upon a version of Union.”<sup>56</sup> Instead, this “act of defiance” held an irreconcilable conflict wherein no “new Union” was produced, ushering in a “repudiation of the past,”<sup>57</sup> or at least a repudiation that the meaning of the past could be applied with the same recognition among citizens.

While the South generally emphasized Washington’s role as a leader of a revolution, the

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<sup>52</sup> Edward Everett, “The Character of Washington,” excerpt taken from Ronald F. Reid and James F. Klumpp (eds), *American Rhetorical Discourse*, Third Edition (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2005), 424.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Michael Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf Publishers, 1991), 71.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 88.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Nagel, *One Nation Indivisible: The Union in American Thought, 1776-1861* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 279.

<sup>57</sup> Nagel, *One Nation Indivisible*, 279.

North emphasized Washington's role in *establishing* government and forging national unity, which is especially evident, according to Spaulding and Garrity, in the embrace of the Farewell Address: Washington's parting words mark the *transition* in American life from revolution to "the republican virtues of industriousness, sobriety, and private virtue."<sup>58</sup> Insomuch as Northern arguments remembering the Founding Fathers sought to, in the words of Michael Kammen, "minimize genuinely revolutionary aspects of the American Revolution,"<sup>59</sup> Washington's 'Farwell Address' was an invaluable match with the politics of the Civil War: a central Revolutionary figure advocating for political and sectional cohesion.<sup>60</sup>

Even as the debate on American Unionism persisted throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century, the memory of the Farewell Address remained a contested issue of regional possession. Only 12 years prior to the 1862 commemorations, tensions arose on the Senate floor as Henry Clay proposed that the deliberative body appropriate Washington's Farewell Address in its literal form. As a copy of the Farewell Address went up for popular auction, Clay saw it fitting that the Senate intervene on behalf of the

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<sup>58</sup> Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 195; Matthew Spaulding and Patrick Garrity, *A Sacred Union of Citizens: George Washington's 'Farewell Address' and the National Character*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 109.

<sup>59</sup> Michael Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 89.

<sup>60</sup> One of the fascinating components of the extensional life of the Farewell Address is timing. As Furstenburg has demonstrated with his summary of the publication history through 1865, new editions of the Farewell Address spiked in conjunction with moments of national crisis since Washington's death, particularly the War of 1812, the compromise efforts of 1850, and the formal secession of 1860-1861. Union was on the public mind in the midst of secession. Even more intriguing, publication of the Declaration of Independence during the Civil War plummeted as the volume of new editions of the Farewell climbed. Though Furstenburg does not suggest it, such data seems to indicate a willful attempt to temporarily forget the Declaration (or its revolutionary connotations), and to instead remember Washington's Farewell. See Furstenburg, *In the Name of the Father*, 43 and 238-239; See footnote 118 of this chapter for additional context relative to 1862 in particular.

relic's enormous shared national value. Washington's preeminence in the national and political culture, Clay claimed, necessitated that the Senate, with its most fundamental instinct, act on its "feeling of attachment to [this] object[s], associated with the memory of those we venerate," and bring discordant hearts together around the father of the country.<sup>61</sup> Noting the "sounds of disunion and discord" reverberating through Congress, Clay saw no other document that would allay sectional tensions than the "truly parental advice" etched in Washington's own hand.<sup>62</sup> Clay's remarks introducing the legislation did not mollify Southern Senators.

The response to Clay's proposal is telling. Senator Henry Foote of Mississippi, who would later serve in both Confederate Congresses, endorsed Clay's resolution, but not without rescuing the South from any sense of condemnation in the mind of his colleagues. As Foote quickly refuted, the union of Washington's words was dear to the Southern confederacy and any talk of "agitation" can be traced to the North: Whatever "geographical parties" exist, Foote claimed, they derived from "northern incendiaries and their traitorous allies (few in number I should hope) in one or two of the southern States." The "especial countrymen of Washington, the men of the South," Foote continued, could not be pegged with disinterest in union. Even more, he concluded, such boundless activities in the North indicate that purchasing a manuscript would not dampen aggressive activity: "Political demagogues will still go on *scheming* and *scheming*, until their mischievous end shall be accomplished."<sup>63</sup> Passing Clay's

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<sup>61</sup> *The Congressional Globe*, Tuesday, January 24th, 1850, 226.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *The Congressional Globe*, Tuesday, January 24th, 1850, 227.



proposal *was* in the interest of the Union insomuch as it denounced the “*real and only enemies of the Union*,” who, Foote suggested, were Northern critics of Southern slavery.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the most surprising contribution of the debate on appropriating the tangible copy of the Farewell Address is the ambivalence of the future president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis. Davis understood the attraction of “authority” embodied in owning such a document. He voiced protest, however, by stating his belief that “no benefit can result to the country, or to the people generally, from the owning of these sheets of manuscript.”<sup>65</sup> Indeed, Davis’ lack of sentimental suasion provides compelling foreshadowing to the symbolic debate that would unfold in 1862:

I must be pardoned for a want of veneration for relics, or for symbols of faith in the faithful; nay more, for saying that a devotion to men which extends to the inanimate objects connected with [t]hem, is an extreme unworthy of our people. We are utilitarians, and it is not in keeping with what character to be led away by sentiment.<sup>66</sup>

As multiple studies attest, the Civil War witnessed two divergent themes in the memory of George Washington. While the South remembered Washington’s role as leader of the American Revolution, the North emphasized his role establishing a national government and his appeals to sectional unity.<sup>67</sup> The Farewell Address resides between these two visions of Washington: a revolutionary figure making the case of “the republican virtues of industriousness, sobriety, and private virtue,” all of which support the larger case for federal Unionism.<sup>68</sup> For the commemoration of 1862, however, efforts were made to put

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<sup>64</sup> *The Congressional Globe*, 226.

<sup>65</sup> *The Congressional Globe*, January 24th, 1850, 227.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 195; Michael Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 89.

<sup>68</sup> Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 195; Matthew Spaulding and Patrick Garrity, *A Sacred Union of Citizens: George Washington’s*

the sentiment of Unionism and the words of Washington on the lips of citizens across the Northern landscape. No text was better suited to confront the meaning of division hanging over the public consciousness in 1862.

## REMEMBERING THE TEXT

The breadth and depth of literature on public memory studies demonstrates that rhetoric's fourth canon is in the midst of a robust revival.<sup>69</sup> Contemporary scholars define public memory as a "textual practice," "expressive form" that is embodied in material substance, existing "in the world rather than in a person's head."<sup>70</sup> Memories are made public as texts. As the ongoing commemorative planning and performance of George Washington's Farewell Address indicate, however, rhetorical texts are not only the *vehicle* by which communities remember, but in some circumstances are also a reflection of communal memory. Or as Edward Casey has astutely claimed, "a public speech, meant for the moment, gets preserved despite its author's intentions."<sup>71</sup> Instead of maintaining the traditional relationship of memory represented *through* speech,

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'*Farewell Address*' and the *National Character*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 109; Also see: Garry Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.), 1984.

<sup>69</sup> A summary of relevant public memory literature escapes easy explanation. For views that presume memory is part of a cultural framework influenced by conditions of the present, see: Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 1992; James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 1993; Kendall R. Phillips (ed), *Framing Public Memory* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press), 2004; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2009; Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press), 2010; John Gillis (ed), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1994.

<sup>70</sup> Stephen H. Browne, "Reading, Rhetoric and the Texture of Public Memory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 (1995), 237; John Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, 3; Barbie Zelizer, "Reading the Past Against The Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12 (June 1995): 232.

<sup>71</sup> Edward S. Casey, "Public Memory in Place and Time," in *Framing Public Memory*, ed, Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 18.

commemorations in 1862 remind us that in some instances the speech itself *is* the memory of communal reflection.

Though recitations of the Farewell Address on Washington's birthday throughout the 1850s, the 1862 commemoration exemplifies the ideological contest for perpetual Unionism that informed public remembrance of the text.<sup>72</sup> Such sentiments echoed the rhetorical contest of the Civil War, represented poignantly in Lincoln's public discourse. For Lincoln and other Northern politicians, knowing the intents of founders like Washington was the key strategy to winning the rhetorical contest for the *United States*. In his moving oration at Cooper Institute, Lincoln asked, "Could Washington himself speak, would he cast the blame of that sectionalism upon us, who sustain his policy, or upon you who repudiate it?"<sup>73</sup> The First Inaugural Address further highlights an even more explicit rendering of this sentiment as Lincoln maintains that the American Union was "much older than the Constitution," and by such principle, "perpetual."<sup>74</sup> For Lincoln and advocates of permanent Unionism, the Confederacy was illegal, not sovereign. Followers of this mindset dared not even legitimate secession by name: according to Wills, Lincoln held that "[t]he states had not seceded since they could not."<sup>75</sup> From its inception as a public petition to its evolution in Congressional debate, and its iteration in both Congress and the public writ large, the memory of the Farewell

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<sup>72</sup> "Union," *The New York Herald*, 24 February 1851; "Our Boston Correspondence," *The New York Herald*, 23 February 1856, pg. 4; "Washington's Birthday," *The Boston Herald*, 24 February 1857, pg. 4. [All Accessed through ProQuest Civil War Era, 1 April 2010].

<sup>73</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "Address at Cooper Institute," in *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865*, ed, Donald E. Fehrenbacher, (New York: The Library of America, 1989), 121.

<sup>74</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address," 217.

<sup>75</sup> Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, 133; *Emphasis in original*.

Address was framed as enduring affirmation of Washington's Union and the irrelevance of the so-called Confederacy.

The original petition to repeat the Farewell Address for Washington's birthday in 1862 was submitted by Philadelphia Mayor Alexander Henry. Henry's appeal requested that the Congress and the country remember the importance of "Constitution and Union" as recognition of the ongoing "Great Rebellion" from the previous year.<sup>76</sup> Reverting to Washington's testament was a demonstration for "every loyal American citizen," Henry claimed, a sentiment Congress maintained in its planning of the celebration.<sup>77</sup> In the U.S. House, Rep. John Crittenden (Unionist-KY) introduced the measure, claiming it "does not relate to politics at all," but would "kindle the memory of [Washington] into the flame of patriotism" and "enable us the better to maintain and defend that great and free Government and Union which, under God, he established for us."<sup>78</sup> Senator Andrew Johnson (D-TN) voiced support in the Senate for "carrying out their [signers of the petition] prayer," suggesting that reciting the text would allow citizens to "recur to those days which gave birth to the republic."<sup>79</sup> The Farewell Address—a final note in Washington's long public career—would be a point of focus when a shared rationality of national identity was split at the root.

Repeating Washington's Farewell Address was through and through a reaffirmation of perpetual Unionism. Lincoln's General Order of 18 February 1862—

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<sup>76</sup> The United States National Archives and Records Administration, "Memorial of the Mayor and Other Citizens of Philadelphia," 31 January 1862, <http://www.archives.gov/global-pages/largerimage.html?i=/legislative/features/washington/images/philadelphia-l.jpg&c=/legislative/features/washington/images/philadelphia.caption.html> [Accessed on 10 April 2010].

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> U.S. Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 1862. 37th Congress, 2nd Session, 726-727, and 738.

<sup>79</sup> See: U.S. Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 1862. 37th Congress., 2nd Session, 738.

which directed that “extracts” of the text be recited at “every military post and at the head of the several regiments and corps of the Army”<sup>80</sup>—demonstrates how selective points of emphasis in the text reflect a commitment to national union. Lincoln’s artful edit profiled Washington’s call to “confirm the attachment” of citizens to their country and the common interest and indispensability of the Union and its laws, while *excising to silence* mention of “Geographic discriminations,” or Washington’s well-known warning of political factions, giving the armed forces a reading of the Farewell Address that prized national Union without emphasizing the faults of regional or ideological divides.<sup>81</sup> Chaplain Thomas Stockton’s prayer preceding the reading of the Farewell Address in Congress further crystalized this sentiment, appealing to “our southern brethren,” that they “soon lay down the arms which they ought never have taken up, and return to the common love which waits to embrace them.”<sup>82</sup> Such iterations of the Farewell Address recognized the seceded states as acting out of bounds from Washington’s council, *but not beyond* the national community defined in the text: “The Unity of Government which constitutes you one people,” as Washington wrote, was

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<sup>80</sup> General Order No. 16, as printed in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series 3, Volume 1*, printed by the United States War Department (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), 892-893. Accessed through “Making of America” and the Cornell University Library, <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/moa-cgi?notisid=ANU4519-0122> [Accessed on 1 September 2010].

<sup>81</sup> See Lincoln’s edit in General Order Number 16 (in the above endnote).

<sup>82</sup> U.S. Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 1862. 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, 58.

[Pages that follow this citation break from the expected chronology, showing a change of date and page number from page 58 to page 913. The reason for this discrepancy is unknown, but the citation, as it is found, is listed above].

invoked as a national *ethos* that was perpetually—even stubbornly—“dear to you” in remembrance.<sup>83</sup>

What began as a petition from Philadelphia citizens quickly morphed into a Congressional plan for remembrance, presidential war orders, and widespread participation. Orders to convene mass observances of the Farewell Address reflect the practice of what William Riker calls “heresthetic,” or the “art of setting up situations” to support a significant purpose.<sup>84</sup> To urge public remembrance of the Farewell Address in 1862, Lincoln issued public orders through the nation’s newspapers. In one order, Lincoln encouraged recital of the Farewell Address, “or a suitable part of it,” in both military and public settings.<sup>85</sup> A subsequent proclamation called on citizens to “assemble in their customary places of meeting for public solemnities,” the principle feature which was the reading of the Farewell Address. These recommendations met public results. Multiple meetings (often within the same city) took form in an array of sites, such as city halls, churches, synagogues, and hospitals. Citizens in Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, Providence, New York City, and San Francisco—just to name the major metropolitan areas—congregated to hear Washington’s text as the “principal

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<sup>83</sup> George Washington, “Farewell Address,” in *George Washington: Writings*, ed., John Rhodehamel (New York: Library of America, 1997), 964.

<sup>84</sup> William Riker, “The Core of Campaigning: Rhetoric and Heresthetic,” in *The Strategy of Rhetoric: Campaigning for the American Constitution*, edited by Randall L. Calvert, John Mueller, and Rick K. Wilson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 9.

<sup>85</sup> A description of reading the ‘Farewell Address’ in the Capitol and Lincoln’s suggestion that publics and armies participate by reading the text “or suitable part of it” “wherever practicable” can be found in “Washington’s Birthday,” *The New York Herald*, 11 February 1862, pg 5; Lincoln’s “Order Respecting the Presentation of Rebel Flags” appeared in *The New York Herald*, 19 February 1862, pg 1; Lincoln’s Proclamation recommending that people assemble to hear the Farewell Address was published in *The New York Herald*, “Washington’s Birthday: Proclamation of the President of the United States,” 20 February 1862, pg 1; Plans to follow “the President’s proclamation” in time for observances of Washington’s Birthday were noted with detail in *The Boston Herald*, “Affairs About Home: The Observance of Washington’s Birthday,” 22 February 1862, pg 4 [All Accessed through ProQuest Civil War Era].

feature” of remembrance.<sup>86</sup> The value of the text was readily apparent and reflective of the Union’s permanence in the public imagination. The *San Francisco Bulletin* claimed that reading the address meant a commitment to the “triumph of loyalty over treason ... of the Constitution over insurrection,” as it urged readers to find guidance in the sacrosanct text: “It reads like a magnificent chapter of prophecy.”<sup>87</sup> Writing in hindsight, the *New York Herald* observed that commemoration of Washington’s birthday in 1862 was celebrated “as it was never before and as it never will be again”: the day was one of “fighting for the ‘old Union’ inherited from ‘the Father of His Country,’” and “a day of jubilee in honor of recent glorious victories over a gigantic sectional rebellion.”<sup>88</sup> Baltimore’s newspaper *The Sun* elaborated on the effect of remembrance, noting that “the memory of Washington still glows with effulgence on the alter of every patriot heart from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande, and from the Atlantic across plain and mountain to the peaceful shores of the Pacific.”<sup>89</sup> Across the Northern landscape, the Farewell Address became a purposeful—and nearly unavoidable—vehicle for affirming the sentiment of American Unionism central to the memory of the text. In the

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<sup>86</sup> “News From Washington: Washington’s Birthday.” *The New York Herald*. 20 February 1862 [Accessed through ProQuest Civil War Era], pg. 1; “Washington’s Birthday.” *The New York Herald*. 21 February 1862 [Accessed through ProQuest Civil War Era], pg. 2; “Washington’s Birthday.” *San Francisco Bulletin*, Vol. XIII, page 3, 21 February 1862 [Accessed through Early American Newspapers]; “The Birthday of Washington”; “Washington’s Birthday,” and “Affairs About Home,” *The Boston Herald* (morning edition), 22 February 1862, pg. 1; James Gordon Bennett, “The One Hundred and Thirtieth Anniversary of Washington’s Birthday.” *The New York Herald*, 23 February 1862, pg. 1; “Celebration at the Jewish Synagogue” and “Celebration of Washington’s Birthday at Bellevue Hospital.” *The New York Herald* 24 February 1862 [All Accessed through ProQuest Civil War Era], pg. 2; “The Birthday of Washington.” *The Sun*, pg. 1, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1862 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>87</sup> “Washington’s Birthday.” *San Francisco Bulletin*, Vol. XIII, 21 February 1862, page 3, [Accessed through Early American Newspapers].

<sup>88</sup> James Gordon Bennett, “The One Hundred and Thirtieth Anniversary of Washington’s Birthday,” *The New York Herald*, 23 February 1862 [Accessed through ProQuest Civil War Era], pg. 1.

<sup>89</sup> “The Birthday of Washington.” *The Sun*, pg. 1, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1862 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

process, local ceremonies brought Washington's text into being from its otherwise amorphous existence as a written document.<sup>90</sup>

Like scattered religious denominations reciting a common prayer, commemorations were separated in space and time, but unified in common words. Repeating the Farewell Address was a way to not only access the memory of Washington, but to display a commitment to Unionism in the commemorative moment. Speaking through the mouths of Northern citizens, the Farewell Address was generically morphed from a political adieu to a formal rebuttal of Southern sovereignty. The Farewell Address in 1862 was not neutrally performed in public space, but was a functional line to the past "reconstructed on the basis of the present."<sup>91</sup>

From the public memory of the Farewell Address, I now turn to the commemorative imaging of Washington's birthday in *Harper's Weekly*. Like most national newspapers, *Harper's Weekly's* print story focuses almost exclusively on the recitation of Washington's text. "The galleries were densely crowded," and Secretary of the Senate John Forney revived the Farewell Address "in a clear, loud voice," the paper noted.<sup>92</sup> Within the confines of *Harper's Weekly*, "Rebel Flags" remains an image seemingly disconnected from the content of the adjoining news story. Placed within the larger commemorative context of public recitations that mimicked remembrance in the

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<sup>90</sup> The New Orleans *Daily Picayune* charged Northern commemorators with ignoring the "appeal to reason" inherent in the Farewell Address, while fighting against Washington's own state, which, like the larger south, was "re-asserting [Washington's] principles and acting after his example," rather than the pomp and "lip service of mouthing speech makers." See: "Washington's Birthday." *The Daily Picayune*. 22 February 1862 [Accessed through ProQuest Civil War Era], pg. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 40.

<sup>92</sup> *Harper's Weekly*, "Washington's Birthday at Washington," 8 March 1862 [Accessed through the *Harpweek* database].



U.S. Congress, however, “Rebel Flags” remains our only visual artifact making the flag display public. The illustration functioned beyond the traditional role of conveying information. Instead, “Rebel Flags” represents a ceremonial frame for the dispersed publics of the Farewell Address. In the remaining part of my analysis, I account for how a display of flags became apropos for an otherwise verbal occasion, and consider the implications and aesthetic design of “Rebel Flags” as an imagetext for publicly remembering—and visually affirming—Washington’s Union.

#### A VISION OF COMMEMORATION

Flags were the essential mode of communicating public, political, and military allegiances throughout the Civil War. Given the “watershed” moment of flags as popular cultural signifiers and the emerging popularity of illustrated journalism, scholars have noted the prevalence of a visual grammar of how flags participated in the public language of the time.<sup>93</sup> The symbolic value of flags was nearly on par with speech itself. In an editorial printed in July 1861, *Harper’s Weekly* offered a translation of the American Stars and Stripes: “Those stars speak to us of laws of equity as fixed as the eternal heavens, and those stripes, as they wave in the breeze, tell us of that mysterious breath which moves through men and nations that they may be born, not of the flesh, but of God.”<sup>94</sup> Indeed, the presence of a flag amid split conceptions of nationality became the basis of contested and emotional conflict. Upon removing the national flag at Fort Sumter, South Carolina Governor Pickens translated in speech what had been achieved

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<sup>93</sup> Scot Guenter, *The American Flag, 1777-1924* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990), 7.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Guenter, *The American Flag, 1777-1924*, 83.

in the symbolic swap of emblems: “[W]e have lowered it [the Stars and Stripes] in humility before the Palmetto and Confederate flags.”<sup>95</sup>

Regardless of contested public attitude, flags are not self-evident in meaning. As Robert Hariman and John Lucaites have clarified, emblems exist as “a powerful mode of definition and identification” and “iconic appeal.”<sup>96</sup> To be realized, however, flags need to be “situated within the context of specific social types or signs of vernacular life” wherein they resonate as “a performance of the sociality that is ground of politics” and the reason for “taking up the banner of allegiance of the country.”<sup>97</sup> As representative banners of national status, flags become visual arguments of inclusion or exclusion of an “imagined community.”<sup>98</sup> In an age when flags were sewn by townspeople, blessed by clergy, and presented to soldiers upon departing for battle, issues of design and representation were compelling modes of visual argument, akin to what Cara Finnegan has called “image vernacular” reasoning, or a visual conclusion that is “context bound” and inferred through shared public understanding.<sup>99</sup> To highlight the vernacular reasoning of flags as arguments, consider the example of the Confederate Stars and Bars emblem. The original Stars and Bars design imitated the American flag, reducing both stripes—from 13 to three—and the number of stars representing states—from 34 to

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<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Woden Teachout, *Capture the Flag: A Political History of American Patriotism* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 94-97.

<sup>96</sup> Robert Hariman and John Lucaites, “Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (November 2002): 371. Also see: Richard D. Pineda and Stacey K. Edwards, “Flag Waving as Visual Argument: 2006 Immigration Demonstrations and Cultural Citizenship,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 43 (Winter and Spring 2007): 164-174.

<sup>97</sup> Hariman and Lucaites, “Performing Civic Identity,” 372.

<sup>98</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 6.

<sup>99</sup> Cara Finnegan, “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8 (2005): 34. Finnegan introduces the neologism “image vernacular” to refer to the implicit reasoning evident in late nineteenth-century reactions to a pre-Civil War portrait of Lincoln.

seven—inside a traditional blue canton.<sup>100</sup> Whence removed, Southern stars gave way to a new vision of sovereignty, “the death of the old union,” and a maintenance of what the New Orleans *Commercial Bulletin* called the “American character” of the new emblem (and country.)<sup>101</sup> Through unspoken deduction, national identity was widely interpreted through *seeing* a familiar design in a new flag. Under these constraints and norms of seeing, the Confederate flag was, in the words of Robert Bonner, “visual evidence of treason” to Union sensibilities, and a jealously prized mark of valor if captured and returned to Union hands.<sup>102</sup>

Possession of another’s flag was both a physical and rhetorical process. The emergence of illustrated journalism and the visual associations of flags during the Civil War made for an ideal environment to cultivate a habit of reading events through the display of emblems by which citizens could “see what war looked like.”<sup>103</sup> The “breaking news story *was* the illustration of war,” as distant events were now available

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<sup>100</sup> The number of stars for states in the Confederate flag was not permanently established. Some designers tried to predict the expansion of the Confederacy with an exaggerated display. The symbolic relationship was attractive, Bonner notes, since “it was unclear how many states the new country would encompass.” See: *Colors and Blood: Flag Passions of the Confederate South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 51.

<sup>101</sup> Robert Bonner, *Colors and Blood*, 33; New Orleans *Commercial Bulletin* quoted in Bonner, “Flag Culture,” 300. One Southerner voiced the following opinion to the flag planning committee: “[B]y all that is sacred, do not let them [the Union] monopolize the stars and stripes.” The first Stars and Bars design, so close to the Stars and Stripes, eventually proved unpopular in public opinion and impractical in warfare, yielding the eventual change. See: John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America’s Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 3.

<sup>102</sup> By late 1862, capturing a Confederate flag was a form of “battlefield heroism,” evidenced in the fact that over half of the Medal of Honor dedications during and after the Civil War were given for the “capture of enemy colors.” Bonner, *Colors and Blood*, 125; Coski notes how “the loss of flags occasioned grief and embarrassment.” See: *The Confederate Battle Flag*, 35-37.

<sup>103</sup> Martin Kuhn, “Drawing Civil War Soldiers: Volunteers and the Draft in *Harper’s Weekly* and *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, 1861-1864,” *Journalism History* 32:2 (Summer 2006): 98.

for public witnessing.<sup>104</sup> Like the political language of the day, the most prominent means through which *Harper's Weekly* conveyed public happenings was in the visual grammar of flags.<sup>105</sup> By 1865, the *North American Review* called *Harper's Weekly* “one of the most powerful organs of public opinion” with “vast circulation” built around the “excellence of illustrations” and news coverage.<sup>106</sup> The enthymematic mode of reasoning that allowed citizens to identify national allegiance based on the vexillologic design of an emblem was inherited in the journalism norms that drew sizable public attention for illustrating distant military and political happenings. “Rebel Flags” participates in the visual understanding of Civil War discourse by acting as a commemorative window to how the Farewell Address was displayed to the estimated 100,000 readers of *Harper's Weekly*.<sup>107</sup> Absent an accompanying story, images showed viewers how to understand developing events outside one's personal experience and provided a “vicarious experience of distant and important, people, places, and events.”<sup>108</sup> Reading about the president-elect raising a flag or the surrender of a Union army to a Confederate rival were expressed in terms of the vision of detailed flags in motion,

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<sup>104</sup> Shelia Gallagher, “Drawing as Information,” 25, *emphasis in original*; For more on the impact of illustrations on Civil War journalism, see: Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines: 1850-1865, Volume 2* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 475; Judith Bookbinder, “Civil War Drawings as Art,” in *First Hand: Civil War Era Drawings from the Becker Collection*, edited by Judith Bookbinder and Shelia Gallagher (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 7.

<sup>105</sup> Mark E. Neely Jr. and Harold Holzer, *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War North* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 19-21.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in John A. Kouwenhoven, *Adventures of America, 1857-1900: A Pictorial Record of Harper's Weekly* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938), non-paginated preface.

<sup>107</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines: 1850-1865* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1938), 474.

<sup>108</sup> Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, “Civic Picturing vs. Realist Photojournalism: The Regime of Illustrated News, 1856-1901,” 64.

always reflecting the tensions and identities at stake in public events.<sup>109</sup> Citizens read how various events played out in print columns, and were given images of such events through the presentation of contested emblems. Illustrated prints that defined the norms of Civil War journalism carried abundant meaning while exercising the conventions of visual symbolism.

More than a showcase of visual symbolism, however, the projection of images circulated through newsprint helped foster public knowledge. As Elizabeth Eisenstein argued, printed material had a profound impact on uniting disparate individuals: “Printed materials encouraged silent adherence to causes who advocates could not be located in any one parish and who addressed an invisible public from afar.”<sup>110</sup> Reading a newspaper, Benedict Anderson posited, was akin to participating in a “mass ceremony” before a multitude of identical and anonymous co-participants.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, unlike stories that invited the reading public to witness a visual scene of remote distance and circumstance, “Rebel Flags” visualized a commemorative moment repeated across time and space, a moment readers could relate to and, given the widespread nature of

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<sup>109</sup> *Harper's Weekly* used flags in various political and military-themed news stories. See: “President Lincoln Hoisting the American Flag with Thirty-four Stars Upon Independence Hall, Philadelphia, 22 February 1861. From Photographs by F.D. Richards, Philadelphia,” *Harper's Weekly*, 9 March 1861, 145-146. Article and image retrieved from the online database *Harpweek, LLC* at [<http://app.harpweek.com.libezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/IssueImagesView.asp?titleId=HW&volumeId=1861&issueId=0309&page=145&imageSize=m>] on 15 March 2010; and also “The Rebel Ex-Governor Jackson of Missouri Addressing Colonel Mulligan's Troops After the Surrender at Lexington. Sketched by O.R.,” *Harper's Weekly*, 19 October 1861, 657-658. Article and image retrieved from the online database *Harpweek, LLC* [<http://app.harpweek.com.libezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/IssueImagesView.asp?titleId=HW&volumeId=1861&issueId=1019&page=657&imageSize=m>] on 15 March 2010.

<sup>110</sup> Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, “Some Conjectures About the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought: A Preliminary Report.” *The Journal of Modern History* 40 (March. 1968): 42.

<sup>111</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 35.

public readings, likely did actively take part in 22 February 1862. The image is both a visual bookend to the act of reading the Farewell Address, and a public reference to the occasion, creating a “vicarious experience” of sight: the immediate scene brought before the eyes of multitudinous and dispersed viewers. As television spectacles possess a “unique capacity to deploy images as constructors of texts,” and to “crystalize [the] meaning” of public events, so too nineteenth century illustrated journalism was the means of constituting a public display of distant moments.<sup>112</sup> With the Farewell Address, publics enacted a way of reading together across space. With “Rebel Flags,” *Harper’s Weekly* provided a way of seeing the occasion together through the common visual grammar of flags, bridging distant commemorative contexts.

Categorizing “Rebel Flags” as an imagetext acknowledges the relationship between repeating a text and visualizing a common reference between speech and icon. In the final section of analysis, I bridge my previous argument on the public memory of Washington’s Farewell Address with what I consider the intersecting visual argument of perpetual union in “Rebel Flags.” As the vision of shared commemoration, “Rebel Flags” constitutes a common logic between the memory of the Farewell Address and the related display of national emblems. To read one text alone is to lose the woven nature of visual and verbal argument.

## VISUALIZING THE FAREWELL ADDRESS

Like the commemorative reading of the Farewell Address itself, “Rebel Flags in the Old House of Representatives” resides on a plane of visual contrast. In the context

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<sup>112</sup> Michael Gurevitch and Anandam P. Kavoori, “Television Spectacles as Politics,” *Communication Monographs* 59 (December 1992): 417.

of jealous possession of contested emblems, the image speaks to the Union's military progress.<sup>113</sup> The frame of the image amplifies this potential. Viewers experience only a single corner of a large room showing a crowd of formally dressed sailors, soldiers, and distinguished guests mingling among fifteen vertically hoisted flags dispersed amid the room's Greek revival columns. Aside from one flag representing the Stars and Stripes, other emblems represent only a sample of the victories displaying the symbolic advance of U.S. forces in their contest with the Confederacy. By numbers alone, the image invites the conclusion that Union forces have advanced against Southern rebellion with recurring success, turning readers of a newspaper into witnesses of Union progress. The magic of the image, however, resides in more than numerical contrast.

Based on the position and detail represented, the American flag is positioned as the primary object of the illustration, a surprising point of focus given both the lack of explanation in the adjoining story and the seemingly straightforward title highlighting "Rebel Flags." The U.S. flag is the organizing principle of the illustration, functioning as the focal point and defining the plane of clarity and ambiguity: objects in the forefront are depicted in detail, while similar objects positioned away from the flag are less defined. Six hoisted flags in the back right of the image, for instance, stand as limp ambiguous fixtures with marginal visual resonance. Though symbolic of *some* national identity, they are visually drained of recognition. Aside from the illustration's title, we can only presume they are Confederate flags of some sort, but have little details save the minimal appearance of stars to infer their function or significance. Such ambiguity runs

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<sup>113</sup> For a brief overview of the chronology of the Civil War, see the Library of Congress, "Time Line of the Civil War," <http://memory.loc.gov.ammem/cwphhtml/tl1861.html> [Accessed on 1 September 2011].

contrary to the prevailing norm of illustrations that, more often than not, displayed what Harry Katz called an “accurate” drawing of political events.<sup>114</sup> Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone further note a distinction between “sketches” and “fine drawings” indicative of Civil War newspapers, the former defined by “irregular shading” and “deep shadow[s],” and the latter defined by “precise tonal shading and perspective” and “greater detail and surface finish.”<sup>115</sup> “Rebel Flags” is distinctive, then, for embodying two stylistic norms simultaneously, despite the newspaper’s previous adherence to the expectation of clear definition in several previous images of flags, regardless of what regional identity, scene, or distance was in question.<sup>116</sup> Insofar as the imaging of this commemoration is concerned, accuracy was a convention, not a requirement.

The schema of clarity and ambiguity is further reinforced with the emblems between the Stars and Stripes and the flags in the back right corner. While one flag left of the statue resembles a Confederate Stars and Bars, the two unfurled banners to the right of the statue remain unclear, being either national flags or regimental Union Jack emblems, represented with blue fields and starry cantons. The larger design of the image is pulled together with the flag displaying palmetto trees and stars next to the Confederate Stars and Bars. This emblem, the second largest featured in “Rebel Flags,” creates a confusing blend of icons not commonly associated with Confederate icons. Based on the timing of the occasion and the recently completed military campaigns,

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<sup>114</sup> Harry Katz, “Special Artists of the Civil War: America’s First ‘Photojournalists,’” in *First Hand Civil War Era Drawings From the Becker Collection*, edited by Judith Bookbinder and Shelia Gallagher (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 45.

<sup>115</sup> Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, “Civic Picturing vs. Realist Photojournalism: The Regime of Illustrated News, 1856-1901,” *Design Issues* 16 (Spring 2000): 65.

<sup>116</sup> See the examples in endnote 104, some of which feature very clearly defined and visible Confederate emblems, sometimes to the detriment of the Union cause.



however, this flag most closely represents the Fort Walker flag confiscated from battles along Port Royal and other skirmishes along the South Carolina coast in November 1861. The inclusion of the Fort Walker flag indicates two important points to clarifying the purpose of flags in this space. First, the flag's distinctive design—two palmettos, stars, stripes, and a single crescent moon—has been altered in illustration. In a quiet change, the illustration depicts the flag's stars in a cup below instead of an arc above other emblems, reversing the arrangement of the original design.<sup>117</sup> The depiction of the Fort Walker flag continues a more nuanced story of ambiguity defined in this public image. This flag acts as a bridge between the sharp focus around the Stars and Stripes that slowly recedes to first pell-mell symbolism, then shadowy forms that wash symbolic identity altogether. Once visual declarations of sovereignty, these flags are displayed as limp banners of vague substance. The inclusion of the Fort Walker flag highlights the importance of other banners in its proximity, particularly the American Stars and Stripes. Indeed, the answer as to why the Stars and Stripes plays a prominent role here is uncovered in the regular transmissions of Navy officers throughout military engagements. Flag Officer Samuel Du Pont's correspondences to Gideon Welles and the Navy Department indicate the symbolic significance of Port Royal and the flags associated with its victory. In a memo dated 8 November 1861, Du Pont informed Welles, "The bearer of these dispatches will have the honor to carry with him the captured flags," adding a postscript that the messenger also carries the "first American

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<sup>117</sup> Mary Jo Fairchild of the South Carolina Historical Society provided key insight into the relevance of the Fort Walker flag and its significance to the 22 February 1862 ceremony in Washington, D.C. Phone and e-mail interview with the author, 8 September 2010.

ensign raised up the soil of South Carolina since the rebellion broke out.”<sup>118</sup> An article featured in the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* eleven days later adds further detail on the capture of flags noting that “trophies from Port Royal” are now “displayed at the Navy Department,” adding:

One is a South Carolina State flag, another a flag of the rebel Confederacy, and the other the Stars and Stripes that was first set upon the soil of South Carolina since the rebellion. These trophies attract a great deal [sic] of attention, coming as they do from South Carolina, the fomentor of all our domestic difficulties. They are more highly prized than if they had been brought from any other of the rebel States.<sup>119</sup>

The prominence of the Stars and Stripes in the *Harper's Weekly* illustration mimics the vaulted esteem of the flag following the capture of Confederate forts. This flag is more than a center of clarity in the midst of surrounding ambiguity; it is representative of the centrality of Union and the symbolic rescue of American nationality in the midst of Confederate icons. Sailors in the illustration carefully support and unfurl the cloth, ensuring it does not touch the ground, while visitors across the room attend its display from afar. Men and women turn their heads, a young boy salutes, and, indicating the locale in the Old House of Representatives, Carlo Franzoni's marble statue of Clio the Greek muse of history observes the contrast of national icons. Like the *Harper's Weekly* image, she sketches the day's happening—and the centrality of Union—for posterity.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Samuel Francis DuPont, “Letter from Samuel Francis DuPont to Gideon Welles, November 8, 1861,” in *Official Dispatches and Letters of Rear Admiral Du Pont, U.S. Navy, 1846-1848, 1861-1863* (Wilmington, DE: Press of Ferris Bros. Printers, 1883), 52. Retrieved from, <http://Solomon.cwld.alexanderstreet.com/cgi-bin-asp/philo/cwld/getdoc.pl?S148-D009> [Accessed on 26 October 2011].

<sup>119</sup> *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, “Important from Washington—Two Millions Dollars Worth of Cotton Seized at Beaufort—South Carolinian Professing Loyalty to the Federal Government,” 19 November 1861. Accessed through the online database overseen by the University of Richmond, available at, <http://dlxs.richmond.edu> [Accessed on 25 October 2011].

<sup>120</sup> The Office of the Clerk, The U.S. House of Representatives, “Art & History: Splendid Hall,” accessed from [[http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/art\\_artifacts/virtual\\_tours/splendid\\_hall/index.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/art_artifacts/virtual_tours/splendid_hall/index.html)] on 15 March 2010.

The combined presence of Union and Confederate icons is reconciled with varying degrees of emphasis between clarity and ambiguity. For audiences conditioned to seeing flags as enthymematic icons of identity in physical and print form alike, the choice between clarity and obscurity minimizes the embodied presence of the Confederate States of America, rendering its flags at best indistinguishable and at worst arbitrary. Confederate nationality in this image is lost in uncertainty. The meaning of American nationality is clear, reclaimed, and, given the visual relationship of stars and states in the canton, *unchanged* since the South's supposed secession. This vision of national wholeness in the print both previews and extends Lincoln's thesis on the Union's permanency in visual form. As a final consideration, this analysis shifts to the illustration's relationship to the act of visualizing the repetition of the Farewell Address.

President Lincoln did not attend the commemoration of Washington's 130<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1862, as he was mourning the recent death of his son, Willie. We cannot know what Lincoln would have said to mark the occasion. However, his executive orders and proclamation indicate awareness of the occasion's importance in placing the memory of Washington in favor of Union victory. Lincoln's War Order of 23 January 1862, for instance, called on a "general movement of the Land and Naval forces" against "insurgent forces" to commence on 22 February 1862.<sup>121</sup> Demonstrating further awareness of Washington's birthday—and the impact of visual possession—Lincoln issued a second order to Congress in the midst of its official planning, submitting that:

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<sup>121</sup> Lincoln, *Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865* (New York: Library of America, 1989), 303.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, in the Hall of the House of Representatives, immediately after the Farewell Address of George Washington shall have been read, the rebel flags lately captured by the United States forces, shall be presented to Congress by the Adjutant General, and disposed of as Congress may direct.<sup>122</sup>

Though members of Congress objected to the display and even proposed additional texts to be read in order to undercut the Confederacy, Lincoln—and by extension, the public—had a preconceived notion of pairing of the Farewell Address with captured flags well before anyone recited, “Friends and Fellow Citizens” with a common voice.<sup>123</sup>

By visually sidestepping the oral reading of the Farewell Address detailed in coverage of the event, *Harper’s Weekly* brought the occasion of repetition into being through a visual emphasis on the American flag. The significance of this common vision is evident in its seemingly ordinary display amid icons of secession. All customary symbols in the Stars and Stripes indicate *no change* in national identity since the secession effort of 1860-1861. Woden Teachout has astutely noted how the Stars and Stripes was open to interpretative changes at the outset of the Civil War, as abolitionist groups excluded stars of the Confederacy, and proposed a vision of

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<sup>122</sup> Lincoln’s “Order Respecting the Presentation of Rebel Flags” appear in *The New York Herald*, 11 February 1862, pg 5; the order was also read in Congress and printed in: U.S. Congress, *Congressional Globe*. 1862. 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 911.

<sup>123</sup> Rep. Owen Lovejoy (R-IL) suggested to the planning committee that the Declaration of Independence be read alongside the Farewell Address. This motion was briefly considered and wisely rejected. See: U.S. Congress, *Congressional Globe*. 1862. 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 835; For the additional context of the decision to privilege one and forget the other, see footnote 57 of this chapter; A last-minute appeal to *not* display confiscated flags as part of the ceremony commenced in the U.S. House of Representatives on 21 February 1862. This controversy made for interesting debate, but proved ineffective to changing the original plans. See: U.S. Congress, *Congressional Globe*. 1862. 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 912-914; In strange manner, the *New York Times* editorialized that Congress made the right decision in *not* presenting the flags. The paper, it seems, rushed to judgment in assuming the debate equated to removing flags from the ceremony. Lincoln’s order to display flags commenced as planned. Of note, the paper proclaimed, “We want them not hung up among the trophies of the old and glorious wars. Better to let them rot as the memory of the wicked whose cause they symbolize will rot. Let there be no memorial to keep alive in men’s memories the Nameless Crime [secession].” See: “Congress and the Rebel Flag,” *New York Times*, 24 February 1862, pg 4 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

nationality absent the seceded states.<sup>124</sup> Neither Confederate nor abolitionist efforts to challenge the original Union is incorporated into the design of “Rebel Flags.” What at first appears to be a display of size or proportion is the visualization and remembrance of the Farewell Address via contested emblems in common space. In similar fashion to the Farewell Address in the Congress and the country, “Rebel Flags” embraces the theme of perpetual unionism. It visualizes the moment of remembering a text while at the same time reflecting the dominant logic of *how* the text was remembered. “Rebel Flags,” in other words, is not a complementary expression removed from the Farewell Address, but is instead the visual display of how the Farewell Address was remembered, ignoring Southern sovereignty and reifying a permanent Union through an image of the unadulterated Stars and Stripes.

The expressed subject of “Rebel Flags” is subverted on two levels that exemplify its function as an imagetext. First, the title paired with the illustration betrays any real interest in rebel flags within the norms of illustrated journalism. Ambiguity hangs over Confederate icons like a shadow, keeping confiscated flags at bay from the aesthetic clarity of the Stars and Stripes. The focus on flags is seemingly misapplied: the article emphasizes the recital of the Farewell Address as the event most easily identifiable to readers in the public. As the representative image of remembering the Farewell Address in 1862, however, the illustration envisions a moment of remembrance and, in this

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<sup>124</sup>. Woden Teachout, *Capture the Flag: A Political History of American Patriotism* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 87; Lowance reminds us that calls for secession were not isolated to the South, but included abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison, who advocated the North’s break from the South as a means of national purification. See: Lowance, “The Abolitionist Crusade,” in *A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debates in America, 1776-1865*, ed, Mason Lowance (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 328.

regard, clarifies its subject: it visualizes the memory of Washington's Union prevalent in and around the historical context. By way of its close association to reciting the Farewell Address, "Rebel Flags" represents an imagetext of pro-Union ideology, fusing the symbolic associations of Washington's text with the American flag, inviting the memory of the text to be read, understood, and clarified in terms of the iconic rendering. Washington's words, like the flag's enthymematic disposition in "Rebel Flags," affirm the South's place in an ideal of permanent Union, even as protests of secession are muted—or made invisible—to the public imagination.

## CONCLUSION

Lincoln won the rhetorical contest of national identity with arguments of the Union's permanence. As this study has shown, Lincoln's forensic appeals to history were also translated into popular form through public commemoration and the visual display of icons in illustrated print. Prior to the commemoration in Congress, Rep. Edward Haight (D-NY) urged Lincoln to present the Farewell Address again to the public, claiming the country was "vindicating its nationality by putting its ~~flag~~ [sic] insulted flag back where Washington left it."<sup>125</sup> The rhetorical dynamics between Congressional commemoration, public participation, and the visualization of remembrance in *Harper's Weekly* fulfilled Haight's request more than he could have dreamed. Though "Rebel Flags in the Old House of Representatives" never ascended to public prominence as Civil War iconology, its significance resides in its seemingly

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<sup>125</sup>. "Edward Haight to Abraham Lincoln, Monday, February 17th, 1862," available through *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*, Series 1. General Correspondence, 1833-1916 (Washington, D.C.: American Memory Project [2000-2002]), <http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mal/mal1/145/1456500/001.jpg> [accessed 15 March 2010].

ordinary representation of commemorative space. Choices of focus and display reveal the multiple currents by which the ideology of perpetual Union was translated from political discourse to the commemorative vision of the Farewell Address via the ways of seeing flag symbolism in the early 1860s.

As public memory, the Farewell Address was a powerful statement easily matched to the concerns of pro-Union politicians and citizens. The imagetext of “Rebel Flags,” however, reminds us that the application of a speech extends beyond its verbal iterations and reiterations. At the intersection of ceremonial repetition and a culture immersed in illustrated icons, “Rebel Flags” impels us to further examine ways in which repetition of discourse might be enlivened by an adjoining imagetext, should we know where to look for it. As future studies consider the overlay between norms of remembering and ways of seeing, we may find that the memory of texts—particularly those resuscitated by repetition—become visibly charged through adjoining symbolic expressions in their political context. As analysis of the exceptional moment following February 1862 demonstrates, “Rebel Flags” enhances our understanding of how the logic of Unionism was enlivened through national performance and associative visual grammars. This symbolic weaving of speech and icons in the politically charged winter of 1862 ensured that the Farewell Address was translated into sight, and given a deep breath in a long, contested life.

## CHAPTER V

### MEMORY AS DISPLAY, RECOLLECTION AS PALIMPSEST:

#### REPETITION OF THE FAREWELL ADDRESS IN THE U.S. SENATE

*“Read in accordance with resolution of the Senate by  
(signed) J. B. Foraker, Feb. 22nd 1900.”*

—First entry in the Senate’s chronicle of reading George Washington’s Farewell Address<sup>1</sup>

*“Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”*  
—Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition*.

#### INTRODUCTION: REPETITION IN ISOLATION

*“Read according to custom and in pursuance of an order of the Senate, by designation of the Vice  
President, Calvin Coolidge, this 22nd day of February 1923,  
(signed) Carter Glass, Virginia.”*

The third week of February brings the commemorative performance of George Washington’s Farewell Address to the U.S. Senate. The occasion marks the first president’s birthday. In terms of conventional public memorializing, the display appears to be all for naught: a solitary speaker recites the Farewell Address to a nearly vacant Senate chamber while printed copies of the text sit atop unattended desks.<sup>2</sup> Clocked at nearly one hour, the ritual is challenging for even the most accomplished speakers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United States Senate, Office of the Secretary, “Farewell Address Notebook,” from [http://senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Washingtons\_Farewell\_Address.htm] on 10 April 2010. All additional entries found here unless noted otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> “Rows of unoccupied desks” and sparse crowds “had no effect on the fleet execution of the oration,” according to *Roll Call*, “George Just Doesn’t Draw the Crowds.” February 21st, 1985, n. pag; by 1988 the trend was clear when the Senator reading Washington’s words “gave the traditional reading of ... [the] farewell address to a nearly empty Senate chamber.” See: *New York Times*, “Washington’s Words Echo Through Senate.” February 16th, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> The Senate’s website states the following on the length of the ritual’s proceedings: “In 1985, Florida Senator Paula Hawkins tore through the text in a record-setting 39 minutes, while in 1962, West Virginia Senator Jennings Randolph, savoring each word, consumed 68 minutes.” See: United States Senate Webpage, “Washington’s Farewell Address,”



Senators begin smoothly—even confidently—but eventually succumb to the paragraph-long sentences that constitute the text’s typographic style.<sup>4</sup> As the speaker rounds his or her way past Washington’s praise of union, warning of factional parties, and advice on the tenets of public virtue, the task is finally expended and relief comes in the form of a well-deserved quaff of water. The text has been recited and the ritual is complete—or so it seems. In the Senate cloakroom, outside of the view of C-SPAN cameras, a second dimension of remembrance begins. Engaging a new text, the Senator scrawls his or her name and personal response to the Farewell Address in a leather-bound notebook, adding a new page to an ongoing chronicle of prior speakers dating back to 1900. Alone again, our Senator has concluded commemoration of George Washington’s birthday in the deliberative body of the U.S. Congress. Both the Farewell Address and the chronicle of responses are retired until the perennial cycle commences the following February.

The Senate’s commemorative ritual is as unorthodox in commemorative form as it is overlooked in public observation. Scholars have either ignored a systematic account of the ritual, or falsely labeled the act as discontinued—testimony, perhaps, to its seemingly irrelevant public status.<sup>5</sup> The unconventionality of the ritual and its elusive

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[[http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Washingtons\\_Farewell\\_Address.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Washingtons_Farewell_Address.htm)]. Accessed on 10 April 2010.

<sup>4</sup> On the artistry of Washington’s “complex style,” see: Michael J. Hosteletter, “Washington’s Farewell Address: Distance as Bane and Blessing.” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5 (2002), 396.

<sup>5</sup> To my knowledge, four respected scholars from various fields have made this false assertion. As of this writing (2012), the ritual has been ongoing for well over one hundred years. Michael Kammen falsely claimed, “the long-standing tradition of reading the entire Farewell Address out loud in the U.S. Senate on Washington’s birthday quietly vanished.” Barry Schwartz wrote, “Every year we are reminded that the United States House and Senate no longer assemble for the annual reading of Washington’s Farewell Address.” Finally, rhetorical scholars Stephen Lucas and Susan Zaeske suggested that the ‘Farewell’ “continued to be read in Congress each February 22 *until the 1970s*.” See: Kammen, “Some Patterns and Meanings of Memory Distortion in American History,” in *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past* (ed), Daniel L. Schacter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997),

public stature has made it almost appear unapproachable to investigation: “Here, perhaps, I ought to stop.” The Senate’s exercise seems to defy precepts of conventional commemoration: a text is recited without a captive audience, then conjoined in the isolated expression of writing, both of which happen with perpetual regularity and cyclical fashion regardless of community involvement. A written text is oralized; the act of speaking begets writing. Unconventional as remembrance of Washington might be, the Senate’s ritual of recitation remains one of the most longstanding and relevant case studies of ceremonial repetition in American public discourse. Unlocking its intricacies is an unavoidable obligation for this study, and a task, I will argue, that helps us further reconcile the question of how texts maintain, sustain, and evolve as artifacts of memory.

As the preceding chapters have illustrated, the life of reading takes different forms, and ceremonial repetition is an opportunity to expand, constrain, or reconstitute the meaning of a text, and re-imagine the words of others through collective remembrance. Repetition alone, however, is not inherently conducive to a text’s extensional life: words are publicly imagined in some way that positions texts to interact in public view. The activity of reading defines this process. Texts, Giddens reminds us, emerge from a joint contribution, understood as “the concrete medium and outcome of a process of production, reflexively monitored by its author and reader.”<sup>6</sup> Thus far, our exploration of ceremonial repetition has examined how texts have been woven into sites

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335; Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 198; Stephen Lucas and Susan Zaeske, “George Washington,” in Halford Ryan (ed), *U.S. Presidents as Orators: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 11, *emphasis mine*.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 43.

of remembrance to interact with other messages as a means to alter public identity, shared history, and positions of subjectivity. Specifically, this chapter examines the relationship between repetition and remembrance as a way to further scrutinize the process of speech becoming public memory. By addressing the tensions inherent between forms of writing and speaking introduced by the Senate's treatment of the Farewell Address, I seek to expand and clarify how we evaluate ceremonial repetition, and the tools by which we understand the transformation of a text via public performance.

Before we can unlock the tensions and modes of expression in the Senate's ritual, we must first approach and reconcile the seemingly disjointed nature of the commemoration. Like previous chapters of analysis, this study concerns the metaphrastic treatment of a text—a transformation from one form to another. The Senate's procedure of commemoration strikes an odd balance between the public display of the text and the private reflection on its meaning. I argue that the Senate's recitation of the Farewell Address constitutes a rare case wherein the distinctions between memory and recollection are separated in the act of commemoration. Such a disjointed expression, I further argue, undermines the potential to constitute or reconstitute the extensional life for the Farewell Address in the Senate. Arriving at this conclusion carries with it certain presumptions on public memory generally, and the effect of message forms specifically. Delineating the role of memory from recollection dates back to Aristotle's treatise *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, and becomes a necessary way to frame the distinctive steps in both individual and public remembrance. I do not

suggest that the Senate's tradition of reciting the Farewell Address fails to recollect a memory of the text, but rather that the recollection, as it now occurs, is placed in a private, secluded, and interiorized form, distinguished from the otherwise public showing of its oral performance. The Senate displays the initial point of remembrance while secluding the crucial ingredient of its meaning within the present context, effectively amounting to a thin display of the text and a thick—though hidden—claim to what it means. Through this case study, I further support the contention that repetition alone cannot easily sustain the extensional life of a text as public memory.

The disjunction between memory and recollection that may or may not extend the constitutive life of a speech was not inherent in this ritual's original inception. The form of remembering Washington in the U.S. Senate has evolved into its current form from decades of practice, which comprises a slow disengagement with public ceremonies and embrace of therapeutic sensibilities. Beyond a clearer sense of how the Farewell Address does or does not undergo alteration through repetition in the Senate, this study also expands our understanding of how social frameworks—a mainstay in public memory scholarship—influence the texture of commemoration, and how a lack of social framework might indicate a new ethic of remembrance that supports the presence of memory by oneself for oneself.

The overlapping historical and theoretical threads of this essay require a delicate approach. In proposing my critical reading of the Senate's ritual, I present my conclusions in the following manner. First, I provide an overview on the relevant history and evolving dynamics of the Senate's recitation of the Farewell Address.

Spanning more than a century, mouthing the words of Washington has remained the institution's "oldest non-legislative ritual."<sup>7</sup> Second, I provide a theoretical orientation of public commemoration and the distinction between memory and recollection outlined by Aristotle and inherited by contemporary critics. By honing the interplay between one text displayed (the Farewell Address), and another text concealed (the notebook of signatures), I argue that our best mode of understanding how the Senate remembers Washington's text is found in Aristotle's original distinction between memory and recollection. Third, I present an analytical overview of reading Washington's Farewell Address in the U.S. Senate, with particular interest in revealing the importance of rhetorical display, as well as the thematic evolution of the notebook, a depository of remembrance I call an institutional palimpsest. From analysis of the recital display and written reflection, I conclude with relevant implications of the Senate's use of the text, and a proposal for how the Senate may enrich future memory of the Farewell Address as productive ceremonial repetition.

#### DELIBERATIVE EPIDEICTIC: PERSONIFYING WASHINGTON'S GHOST

*"Read pursuant to the standing order of the Senate at the request of Vice President Curtis—February 22, 1933—(signed) Otis F. Glenn, Illinois."*

Congress was meant to argue. A bulk of the U.S. Senate's prescribed institutional protocol is to advise and consent on public law or government appointments. In crucial cases, the upper house assumes a forensic perspective by ruling on articles of impeachment against the president. Designed to deliberate or determine a

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Baker, *Traditions of the United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: Senate Office of Printing and Document Services, 2007), 25.

past fact, the U.S. Senate is an unexpected place to encounter epideictic rhetoric. Like most occasions in American public address, however, the annual reading of the Washington's text arose from neither institutional obligation nor Constitutional provision. The perpetual presence of Washington's words in the deliberate chamber best resemble what Eric Hobsbawm has called an "invented tradition," or a "process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by the past, if only by imposing repetition."<sup>8</sup> To suggest a ritual is *invented* is not inherently negative. Hobsbawm noted that such rites are necessary when older practices are "not used or adapted."<sup>9</sup> Rituals are symbolic spaces, David Kertzer has noted, for our "social dependence" through a collective activity that may "serve political organizations by producing bonds of solidarity without requiring uniformity of belief."<sup>10</sup> Clifford Geertz's study of rituals further supported these observations. For Geertz, rituals—invented traditions specifically—provide a sense wherein "the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world," and thus alter one's perception of reality through "a form of social interaction."<sup>11</sup> Rituals enact community norms for public view. As Catherine Bell has noted, political rituals enact two essential functions: the use of symbols to "depict a group of people as a coherent and ordered community based on shared values and goals," and a

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<sup>8</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm and Herence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions," 8.

<sup>10</sup> David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, 68.

<sup>11</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), 112 and 168.

demonstration—or “display”—of communal “values and goals” derived from “their iconicity with the perceived values and order of the cosmos.”<sup>12</sup>

In the realm of ritual, the Senate’s performance of the Farewell Address is a gem of rhetorical display. The text is perpetually re-made anew in each performance, and isolated from other branches of government, thereby instilling a relationship across time, place, and people. By taking on the norms of epideictic commemoration, the Senate has fashioned an occasion for comprehending a political collective wherein individual members may gain “understanding of its shared self as a community is created, experienced, and performed.”<sup>13</sup> To gather around the text is an everlasting opportunity for speakers and listeners to reflect and re-dedicate themselves to common experiences and cultural memory for the future: through a communal focus, “audience members share, live, and display their community.”<sup>14</sup>

How did the Farewell Address become the basis for sharing and experiencing political community in the Senate? Prior to being the focal point of commemoration, the memory of Washington was a familiar ghost in the political arguments preceding the Civil War, particularly within the deliberative body. In addition to Lincoln’s filiopietistic appeals in his address at Cooper Union, the name of Washington was equally essential in Congressional debates. In 1859 Senator Andrew Johnson—who would become instrumental to organizing the 1862 commemoration of Washington’s birthday—speculated that the spirit of Washington would break the barriers of the grave

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<sup>12</sup> Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 129.

<sup>13</sup> Condit, “The Functions of Epideictic,” 291.

<sup>14</sup> Condit, “The Functions of Epideictic,” 292.

if stirred by talk of disunion: “the patriot soldier who sleeps in his honored grave will rise, shake off the habiliments of the tomb, and forbid the act.”<sup>15</sup> One year later, Representative John Perry (R-ME) echoed a similar eerie premonition for the U.S. House of Representatives. With precise detail, Perry illustrated the ghostly consequences should the bonds of American union dissolve:

We talk of disunion; and yet how can we do it without waking up the memories of the past? Comes there not a voice from the sequestered shade of Mount Vernon, rolling over the waters of the Potomac in trumpet tones, exclaiming: ‘Stay the rude hand, already uplifted to disturb the peaceful repose of the mighty dead and desecrate the quite home of the sleeping hero?’<sup>16</sup>

Invocation of Washington’s spirit was a potent resource for political argument. As a voice of immediate presence in the 1862 commemoration of Washington’s birthday, however, the U.S. Congress could claim the mantle of Washington’s words as their own, and display the distant voice and advocate for unconditional union in their immediate presence.

Andrew Johnson’s early advocacy of the resolution to recite the Farewell Address in 1862 provides further insight to the text’s function as *commemorabilia*. To recite Washington’s parting message was a self-evident appeal. “The memorial speaks for itself,” Johnson intoned on the Senate floor, further stating, “the times speak for themselves; and it does seem to me that we ought to show a willingness to recur to those days which gave birth to the Republic.”<sup>17</sup> But what effect could repetition produce? Senator Hale, in an exchange with Johnson thought it better “to hang some public robber or shoot some cowardly officer of the Army who has occasioned our defeats...to show

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Paul C. Nagel, *One Nation Indivisible: The Union in American Thought: 1776-1861* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1964, 187.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Paul C. Nagel, *One Nation Indivisible*, 230.

<sup>17</sup> *Congressional Record*. 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1862, 738.



that there is vigor in the Government to deal with those that ought to be dealt with, [rather] than to indulge in such observances as this.”<sup>18</sup> Yet, reciting the Farewell Address was a clear appeal to patriotic vigor within the occasion. Personifying the Farewell Address in an official space such as the U.S. Capital utilized what Lawrence Prelli calls “selectively structured vantages points or perspectives” in bringing a text into being.<sup>19</sup> The Farewell Address became a rhetoric of display, embodied—not merely invoked—within the walls of the U.S. Congress, giving listeners a limited sense—“a way of seeing”—how *this* reading of the Farewell Address was understood within its time.<sup>20</sup> For the moment of disunion, I argued in the previous chapter, Washington’s Farewell Address contrasted the national rupture with the fatherly wish for union, and an effort to guilt the South to peacefully return to regional harmony.

Crisis prompted the personification of the text in 1862. When the Senate embraced the Farewell Address twenty-six years later, the drama of display had shifted: Senators were now participants, not spectators, excluding other branches of government from ritual observance. Beyond the situational changes to the ritual little is known about the organizing motive of the 1888 recitation. Compared to the well-documented debates leading up to the 1862 reading, the repetition in 1888 was, by best available knowledge, a celebratory affair of praise rather than blame. The Senate’s own accounting to the event positions the new reading arising from the deliberative body having “recalled the

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<sup>18</sup> *Congressional Record*. 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1862, 738.

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence Prelli, “Rhetorics of Display,” 14.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

ceremony of 1862” for the centennial of the Constitution.<sup>21</sup> Scant details offer little certainty on the motive for recitation. However, both the chief organizer and the general historical era lend insight to a constitutive sentiment that invited reunion rather than guilt of rebellion.

Shaped by an economic revolution and a growing perception of “political stability and social harmony,” the post-Reconstruction framework of American politics facilitated a theme of national healing.<sup>22</sup> As Michael Kammen has claimed, after the “rancor of Reconstruction, many Americans perceived the Revolution—or wanted to—as a mutually shared memory, a common core of national tradition that could banish the old bitterness.”<sup>23</sup> Sectional bitterness melted into forgiveness, Kammen elaborates, redefining the image of the Revolutionary generation to be seen less as “revolutionaries” and more as “nation-builders.”<sup>24</sup> If the political context in which the 1888 reading originated was more welcoming of national union than damning sectional rebellion, the chief advocate of the recital, Senator George Frisbie Hoar (R-MA), fit the mold. Hoar epitomized the mood of national reunion with his a “Half-Breed Republican” sensibility, or what biographer Richard Welch, Jr. called a tendency to deviate from the radical wing of the Party’s Reconstruction years to emphasize “social harmony while encouraging

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<sup>21</sup> U.S. Senate, “22 February 1862: Washington’s Farewell Address.” Accessed on 10 April 2010 from [[http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Washingtons\\_Farewell\\_Address.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Washingtons_Farewell_Address.htm)].

<sup>22</sup> Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: Norton, 1998), 116.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Kammen, *A Season of Youth: The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 62.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Kammen, *A Season of Youth*; Michael Kammen, *A Machine That Would Go of Itself: The Constitution in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 121.

economic growth.”<sup>25</sup> Gathered around the Farewell Address, the U.S. Senate could hear the father of the country again, reassured that the inheritance of the textual memory would not be disputed.

Details on the 1888 reading are speculative, though the lack of pomp or debate surrounding Hoar’s proposal of a new reading indicates minimal objection to re-inserting the Farewell Address into the institutional fabric of the Senate, and setting off what would become a political ritual of incredible endurance. The original resolution of 1888 was introduced again in 1893, 1894, and 1896 until, sensing a perpetual need, Hoar’s 1901 resolution easily passed vote. The Senate’s order, as it remains in effect today, dictates the following:

*Resolved*, That unless otherwise directed, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February in each year, or if that shall be on Sunday, then on the day immediately after the reading of the Journal, Washington’s Farewell Address shall be read to the Senate by a Senator to be designated for the purpose by the presiding officer; and that thereafter the Senate will proceed with its ordinary business.<sup>26</sup>

Hoar’s 1901 resolution ensured the Farewell Address would take oral form in the Senate with near perpetuity. What could not be determined, however, is the evolution and reception of the ritual as years progressed.

A historical survey of each reading of the Farwell Address since 1888 would be beyond the scope or purpose of this study. However, two major transitions of reception and practice are important to grasping a historical perspective of the ritual, however: the steady decline of collective interest in the reading, and the growing importance of the leather-bound notebook of signatures to the commemorative process. Though these two

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<sup>25</sup> Richard E. Welch, Jr., *George Frisbie Hoar and the Half-Breed Republicans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90.

<sup>26</sup> *Congressional Record*, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1901. 1385.

components are not directly related, each offers a glimpse into larger questions and implications of repeating to remember central to later analysis.

By the best available accounts, the Senate's recitations of the Farewell Address in through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were communal affairs, meaning the recitation of the text was well attended and engaging to the political community of Senators. When the Senate convened for its second reading in 1893, Senator Pro Tempore Manderson (R-NE) delivered the iteration of the address "with most of the senators in their seats and with a fairly large audience in the galleries, all giving close and respectful attention."<sup>27</sup> Even newspaper reports asked the public to take notice of the Senate's solemnities. The *New York Times* reported on the *absence* of the reading in 1895 when the legislative needs of the Senate overpowered the epideictic possibilities.<sup>28</sup> In 1896, the Senate reconvened its practice, ensuring, the *New York Times* stated, that the "memory of Washington is treasured by the Senate" with a reading and adjournment of other activities as "mark of respect for the name and fame of the great patriot statesman."<sup>29</sup> By a collective show of thanks to a "well modulated" delivery of the text, the Senate showed "gratification by vote of thanks" for the reading, which was given "*close attention*" by "a liberal attendance of Senators," making the

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<sup>27</sup> *The Atlanta Constitution*. "Reading the Address: How Senators Commemorated Washington's Birthday," February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1893, pg 1 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers on 1 February 2012].

<sup>28</sup> *New York Times*. "Too Busy to Celebrate: Congress Remains in Session Considering Routine Business," February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1895, pg 9 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers on 10 March 2009].

<sup>29</sup> *New York Times*. "Observance in the Senate: Washington's Address Read by President Pro Tm. Frye," February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1896, pg 3. [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers on 10 March 2009].

ceremony “thoroughly impressive” on account of its “simplicity” without “ornamentation.”<sup>30</sup>

Consistency eventually bred waning enthusiasm in the twentieth century. In 1900, Senator Foraker’s (R-OH) reading of the text drew an “unusually large attendance of Senators” that later “congratulated” Foraker on his reading of the text.<sup>31</sup> By 1910, however, the recitation was delivered with only “few Senators were present.”<sup>32</sup> Abysmal attendance has characterized the ceremony since. Joycle Kilmer, writing for the *New York Times* in 1917, posed the question to readers directly: “Why is it that so many of us let [Washington’s] birthday pass with no thought except perhaps a momentary gratitude for the holiday, and regard for his memory without the slightest fervor?”<sup>33</sup> Reflecting on the ritual of repetition in the Congress, the *Daily Boston Globe* speculated in 1928 that the ritual was an exercise of inculcation, “just to make sure, presumably, that no new member goes unadvised as to what the first President had to say.”<sup>34</sup> In 1940, roughly one-third of the Senate heard Senator Burke (D-NE) deliver the speech, with the same number attending a later reading in 1952.<sup>35</sup> The 1954 reading

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<sup>30</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, “Washington’s Farewell Address Read by Mr. Frye to a Large Audience in the Senate,” February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1896 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers], n.pag; *New York Times*, “Observance in the Senate: Washington’s Address Read by President Pro Tem. Frye,” February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1896, [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers], n. pag.

<sup>31</sup> *The Washington Post*, “Brief Session of Senate,” 23 February 1900, pg. 4. [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>32</sup> *New York Times*, “The Holiday in Washington: The Capitol Decorated and Depew Reads the Farewell Address,” February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1910, pg. 5 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>33</sup> Joyce Kilmer, “Thoughts on Washington’s Birthday.” *New York Times*. 18 February 1917, pg SM3 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>34</sup> *Daily Boston Globe*, “Congress to Honor Washington Today,” February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1928, pg.2 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>35</sup> *New York Times*, “Birthday Evokes Washington Lore,” February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1940, pg. 3 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers]; *New York Times*, “Washington’s Farewell Address Read in Congress; Stand on Foreign Affairs Evokes Interest,” February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1952, pg. 26 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

seemed “to take on a more contemporary aspect in the light of current debates” on limits to the President’s “treaty-making power” for the future.<sup>36</sup> Interest and numbers dwindled further by the 1960s: the 1962, 1964, 1965, and 1968 readings each garnered between only eight to ten Senators in attendance.<sup>37</sup> By 1973 the occasion drew an audience of five Senators total.<sup>38</sup>

Awkwardness replaced reverence as the dominant sentiment of the event as it reached its eightieth decade of practice. In 1976 the strange bedfellows of Washington’s Farewell Address and President Ford’s veto message in response to a Congressional jobs bill were presented in adjoining recitals.<sup>39</sup> The Farewell Address had become a political mainstay, or, perhaps more directly, evidence of an essential institutional relationship across time. In 1979, for example, a debilitating snowstorm ensured that the reader of the address—Senator John Warner (R-VA)—was one of two Senators present while reciting the speech.<sup>40</sup> Speaking the 1796 text into a nearly empty chamber was a feat in itself for Warner, a captive audience notwithstanding: “If George Washington could make it through Valley Forge, a freshman Senator from his state could certainly tread the

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<sup>36</sup> *New York Times*. “Congress to Hear ‘Farewell’ Again.” February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1954, pg. 20 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>37</sup> *The Hartford Courant*. “Washington Farewell Read to Congress.” February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1962, pg. 24E; *The Hartford Courant*. “Congress Hears Farewell Address.” February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1964, pg. 24F; *New York Times*. “Capital Marks Holiday.” February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1965, pg 35; *New York Times*. “Washington Farewell Speech Read in House and Senate.” February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1968, pg. 36 [All accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>38</sup> *The Hartford Courant*, “Farewell Address Doesn’t Fare Well,” February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1973, pg 54 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>39</sup> *New York Times*. “Two Presidents Heard: A Farewell and a Veto.” February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1976, pg. 49 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

<sup>40</sup> *New York Times*. “Washington Struck by Its Worst Storm Since 1922,” February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1979, pg B2 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspaper].

path from the Port of Georgetown.”<sup>41</sup> The fact the text had been repeated, in other words, trumped the presence or absence of any political community.

Not all observers or participants have maintained enthusiasm in the face of a waning audience. Iterations from the 1980s to present have leaned the audience—inclement weather or not—to roughly two or three dedicated Senators, excluding the reader, as well as “a few tourists” who may unsuspectingly drift in and out of the Senate’s visitor gallery.<sup>42</sup> Even readers—the vehicles of Washington’s words—have sometimes dispensed with enthusiasm for what seems a thankless task. Some would gladly avoid the reading, likening it to “a burden of freshmen Senators,” a trite rite of passage.<sup>43</sup> In 1985, nearly a century after the ritual’s beginning, Senator Hawkins (R-FL) side-stepped the pomp of the day by appropriating an auctioneer’s style, reading the text at record speed.<sup>44</sup> Other Senators have been more open in their dismissal of the event, such as Senator Kassebaum’s (R-KS) blunt autopsy of the ritual she had just completed: “No wonder George didn’t read this. It’s so long and boring.”<sup>45</sup>

The history of reading the Farewell Address in the Senate yields important conclusions. First, the attention and institutional support for the practice wanes early in the ritual’s history. By the first decade of the twentieth century, attendance and relative

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<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*. “Washington Struck.”

<sup>42</sup> *New York Times*. “Washington Address Gets Sparse Audience,” February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1983, pg A13; Bill Linden, “George Just Doesn’t Draw the Crowds,” *Roll Call*, February, 21<sup>st</sup>, 1985; *New York Times*. “Honoring Whatshisname.” February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1985, pg A14; *New York Times*. “Washington: Still Gone.” February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1987; *The Hartford Courant*. “Washington’s Farewell Address Read to Near-Empty Senate Chamber.” February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1986, pg. A2 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers]. These reactions mirror my own experience observing the recitation of the Farewell Address in 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Bill Linden, “George Just Doesn’t Draw the Crowds,” *Roll Call*, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1985, n pag.

<sup>44</sup> Bill Linden, “George Just Doesn’t Draw the Crowds,” *Roll Call*.

<sup>45</sup> *The Hartford Courant*. “Speech Found ‘Boring,’” February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1981, pg. A4 [Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers].

focus on reading the Farewell Address recede from the comparatively popular exchanges in the late nineteenth-century. The recital of the address, built on a general observance rather than an expression of national crisis or reunion, fails to sustain compelling attention. In Randall Collins' terminology, the recital of the Farewell Address after the early twentieth century would have likely produced a situation of low "emotional energy," or the "highly focused, emotionally entrained interaction" that prompts individuals to "come away from the situations carrying the group-aroused emotion for a time in their bodies."<sup>46</sup> For Senator's reciting the Farewell Address, the group is gone from the ritual. Second, the increased attention to the notebook of signatures becomes an increasingly important mode of expression for participants. The dwindling audience and increased propensity to scrawl ideas about the Farewell Address do not move in parallel order. For a bulk of the ritual's history, however, the perceived loss of interacting with others to remember the Farewell Address has been directed toward the act of writing.

The motive for the ritual's notebook is unclear. No one knows precisely who introduced the text, or what motives drove one to record the signatures of participants. The leather-bound text, embossed with the title, "Washington's Farewell Address, Senate Official Copy," exists as a text in perpetual progress, always incomplete and awaiting a new page to collect the thoughts and insights of readers. Regardless of its origin or purpose, the significance of the text is undeniable. Early entries, the first beginning in 1900, reflect an objective, factual, and rudimentary acknowledgment of the

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<sup>46</sup> Randall Collins, *Interactive Ritual Chains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), xii.



Senate custom and the date of the recitation. Signatures of this sort are stacked upon one another, sometimes up to four on a single page. Beginning in the late 1940s and remaining steadfast since, Senators have taken to offering thoughtful, trite, and sometimes controversial observations about Washington, the relevance of the Farewell Address, and the appropriateness of recent political happenings in the text, often taking up a single page or more.

It would be difficult to prove that a lack of attendance initiated use a greater use of the text as a repository of emotional energy, collective effervescence, or public remembrance. The historical record cannot sustain such a causal claim. What is clear, however, is that the notebook was a constant fixture in the ceremony, and was available to Senators throughout major controversies of the early twentieth century that one might expect reflection from the issues and concerns raised in the Farewell Address, such as the League of Nations debate, the Great Depression and New Deal legislation, or the lead-up to World War II. Did the Farewell Address fail to resonate in these public debates? We could not suspend such disbelief.<sup>47</sup> By simple observation, these historical eras are unaccounted for in any detail within the Senate's chronicle of participants. The notebook, in other words, is a medium that only became functional to commemorate Washington at a certain point in the Senate's institutional culture.

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<sup>47</sup> As one example, Kathleen Hall Jamieson has documented how Woodrow Wilson's rhetoric advocating a new American foreign policy interpreted Washington's warning of foreign alliances as a "revised principle" by which the U.S. could intervene in European war. One would expect such an open debate on the meaning of the Farewell Address might prompt a response from lawmakers reciting the text. See Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 104-105.

What started as a medium acknowledging who read the Farewell Address has—as of the late 1940s—come to function as an institutional palimpsest, with extensional energy devoted to synthesizing the meaning of the Farewell Address committed to writing, not speech; to private reflection, not public remembrance. This dichotomy is the defining component to a critical evaluation of the Senate’s ceremonial repetition, and the topic requiring the most careful positioning in terms of a theoretical standard of evaluation. Contemporary scholarship on public memory does not distinguish between an act of memory and an act of recollection—memory itself is thought to be a selective, deliberative process. As I explain in the following section, however, Aristotle’s original distinction between memory and recollection provides us with a necessary vocabulary to match the form of the Senate’s remembrance. Taking a closer look at Aristotle’s brief but theoretically rich reflections on memory will help us position the Senate’s ritual of repetition within the context of extending the constitutive life of Washington’s text.

#### MEMORY AND RECOLLECTION: A THEORETICAL DISTINCTION

*“February 22, 1949. Vice President Barkley honored me in asking me to read Washington’s Farewell Address. As I read this I wondered what our first President would think if he were alive today. Would he condemn the North Atlantic Pact as an entangling alliance? The objective is the same today—freedom. The only difference is the way to obtain that freedom. (signed) Margaret Chase Smith, U.S.S. Maine.”*

The rhetoric of public memory is a textual practice. Memory is expressed through language, but even more, Maurice Halbwachs noted, it is derived from the social frameworks that constitute our relations. Only when an individual dreams of the past—or has “the illusion of reliving it”—does memory occur outside “the great frameworks of

the memory of society.”<sup>48</sup> When Halbwachs suggested that memory arises from collective frameworks, he defined such frameworks as the basis for *reconstructing* “an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society.”<sup>49</sup> Halbwachs’ concern with locating an “image of the past” arises from a longer history of positioning the phenomenon of memory in the realm of human imagination, akin to early theoretical positing of memory as an imprint upon the soul.

No treatise provides a better framework for understanding the tension between memory, recollection, and social frameworks than Aristotle’s *De Memoria et Reminscentia*. This tension provides an ideal fit in accounting for the persisting tension between individual and collective practices of remembrance, as well as spoken and written expressions in the Senate’s commemoration of the Farwell Address. As I demonstrate in the paragraphs that follow, memory for Aristotle is an individual phenomenon, while recollection—a concept elaborated by later theorists—provides the groundwork for the communal framework of recalling the past. By recounting Aristotle’s theory of memory and imagination, we can begin to reconcile the shaping and texturing of memory—spoken and written—as it has evolved in the U.S. Senate.

For Aristotle, memories are images. The oft-quoted terms *topoi* and *loci* refer to “subject matter of dialectic” and “the places in which they were stored.”<sup>50</sup> Memory, in this regard, resides in the same part of the soul “to which imagination belongs,” meaning that memory does not arise without an image.<sup>51</sup> While Aristotle’s treatise on memory

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<sup>48</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 169 and 42.

<sup>49</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40.

<sup>50</sup> Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 46.

<sup>51</sup> Aristotle quoted in Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 49.

and recollection has been received as limited<sup>52</sup> and hard to follow,<sup>53</sup> his observations frame memory within a broader landscape of his *Para naturalia* series on “natural philosophy concerned with the capacities common to both body and soul of living beings.”<sup>54</sup> Distinct from scholars who would couple memory with delivery as “one of the two ‘technical’ part of their subject,”<sup>55</sup> Aristotle’s balances a philosophical and psychological inquiry on the meaning of memory.<sup>56</sup> While Plato framed “objects of dialectical thought” as ideal Forms, existing “separately from the sensible world,” Aristotle understood the human capacity to recall facts or ideas firmly within a lived experience.<sup>57</sup> Retaining knowledge through the senses requires, however, that it be “treated by, or absorbed into, the imaginative faculty,”<sup>58</sup> effectively marrying knowledge of the past with sensory perception.<sup>59</sup> Knowledge exits through the senses, yet is used in different forms to recall the past, Aristotle claimed, leading to a distinction between memory and recollection.

When memory is categorized as a sense of time past as well as an image of such moments, the distinction arises between what Bloch calls “the sensing soul” and “the thinking soul,” memory belonging to the former and recollection belonging to the

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<sup>52</sup> David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 118.

<sup>53</sup> Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 49.

<sup>54</sup> Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory*, 56.

<sup>55</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 2008 [1990], 15.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1972), i; Also see: Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection*, 56-57.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 46.

<sup>59</sup> Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 50.

latter.<sup>60</sup> The capacity of memory is present, Aristotle suggests, within any animal that can recognize an image in their mind. Any animal with a sense time and the ability to imagine can remember, yet, Aristotle clarifies, “only man can recollect.”<sup>61</sup> In distinction to memory’s passive state, recollection is defined as an “active” search: memory is transitory and recollection is an active cognitive process.<sup>62</sup> Said differently, recollection transcends mnemonic recovery to achieve a higher level of mental “reasoning.”<sup>63</sup> For Aristotle, this equates to one mentally engaging in “a sort of search” that is “an attribute only to those animals which also have the deliberating part.”<sup>64</sup> Aristotle’s dualistic frame on humans’ relationship with the past should not be interpreted as stringent division. As Bloch clarifies, Aristotle positions recollection is a process of “searching through images towards a goal,” which, when reached, ceases the process wherein what is retrieved or gained is retained, or “committed to memory.”<sup>65</sup>

While Aristotle’s distinctions on memory and recollection might be helpful in delineating a sense of the past from a selection from the past, contemporary reactions remain mixed. As David Bloch notes, “modern philosophy and science” would be left wanting insofar as Aristotle’s theory of memory is concerned; “few would want to return to a purely Aristotelian theory of memory.”<sup>66</sup> Additionally, Richard Sorabji notes the close distinction between Aristotle’s terms and our contemporary assumptions as he

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<sup>60</sup> David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection*, 75.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 48.

<sup>62</sup> Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection*, 75.

<sup>63</sup> Aristotle, in Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 59.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*; Also see: Paul Ricoeur, *History, Memory, and Forgetting* (trans.) Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 15.

<sup>65</sup> Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory*, 75-77.

<sup>66</sup> Bloch, 118 and 135.

claims, “Whereas *we* might say that memory simply supplies the material, which is then examined by another and more intelligent faculty, Aristotle does not. Memory is just the combined state of being aware of an image in oneself and viewing it as something else that has taken place in the past.”<sup>67</sup> Such critiques of Aristotle’s theory remind us that the broader application of this distinction comes its interpretation in contemporary theory.

Aristotle’s bifurcated theory of remembrance has prompted scholars to foster a greater awareness on the overlapping relationship between memory, speech, and rhetoric. *Memoria* and recollection were, according to Albertus Magnus, a process of “rational discovery of what has been set aside through and by means of the memory.”<sup>68</sup> The importance of one is not fully realized without the presence of the other. Beyond mnemonic devices, an “art of memory” is more appropriately defined, according to Carruthers, as an “art of recollection”: mnemonic devices are in place “for the purpose of *inventio* or ‘finding’”<sup>69</sup> a familiar step in crafting rhetorical expression.

Though Anne Whitehead is quick to note that both memory and recollection are part of a “self-motivated search” on an individual level,” other critics have found abundant insights from Aristotle’s memory treatise.<sup>70</sup> Bruce Gronbeck interprets Aristotle’s reflections on memory and recollection as not only “theoretically provocative,” but invaluable to understanding why *memoria* was “equal in importance” to the other canons of the rhetorical process.<sup>71</sup> Aristotle’s conception of memory,

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<sup>67</sup> Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 71.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 22-23.

<sup>69</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 23.

<sup>70</sup> Anne Whitehead, *Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 25.

<sup>71</sup> Bruce Gronbeck, “The Spoken and the Seen: Phonocentric and Ocularcentric Dimensions of Rhetorical Discourse,” in *Rhetorical Memory and Delivery: Classical Concepts for Contemporary Composition and*

Edward Casey adds, seems to ignore Plato's occupation with the mystic or cosmic forces of remembering, and instead attributes a "link between memory and the *personal* past."<sup>72</sup> If memory is personal, Gronbeck notes, the potentials for recollection are much more publicly minded. By defining recollection in the realm of "thinking," Gronbeck claims, Aristotle's treatise referred to the search for "scientific knowledge," or "what we would call generalized knowledge."<sup>73</sup> Aristotle's views on recollection extend his thesis on memory, positing that one mentally "moves through a series of memory images that are related in an order of succession by locating a suitable starting point and exciting a physiological change which will pass from one image to another until it reaches the object of the search."<sup>74</sup> Key to this distinction is recollection's emphasis on "the reconstruction of sequences of understanding."<sup>75</sup> Citing incarnations from theorists like Longinus, Bacon, and Campbell, Gronbeck argued that *Memoria et Reminiscentia* presents ideas that are "never far from the central concerns of rhetorical theory."<sup>76</sup> By recognizing individual recollections as an investigation to a temporal, generalized, and therefore communal sense of the past, Gronbeck claimed, Aristotle's theory of memory and recollection opens new avenues to rhetoric and memory: that which is *recollected* "is the repository of a society's stock of knowledge—it's collective beliefs, attitudes, and values," while which is *remembered* is "the repository of an individual's life

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*Communication* (ed) John Frederick Reynolds, (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1993), 139.

<sup>72</sup> Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, 14.

<sup>73</sup> Gronbeck, "The Spoken and the Seen," 139.

<sup>74</sup> Whitehead, *Memory*, 26.

<sup>75</sup> Bruce Gronbeck, "The Spoken and the Seen," 141.

<sup>76</sup> Bruce Gronbeck, "The Spoken and the Seen," 147.

events—that person’s pleasurable and painful experiences.”<sup>77</sup> This relationship is key, Gronbeck noted, because “[t]he recollected and the remembered ... are complementary in that their union competes the joining of the social and personal in human affairs.”<sup>78</sup> Gronbeck’s argument connects the importance of communal knowledge and recollection to the rhetorical process that begins with memory.

Whether or not memory and recollection are Aristotle’s intended association with his definition of *topoi* is uncertain. As John Muckelbauer observes, Aristotle “provided no more clear definition of how *topos* functions” other than the metaphoric “place.”<sup>79</sup> Is Aristotle’s emphasis on *images* of memory and the deliberative *search* of recollection an answer to this uncertain question? In Carruthers’ estimation, “topics of argument” and the “places of recollection” that Aristotle connects throughout *Topics* came into fruition in the Middle Ages.<sup>80</sup> Her conclusion on the dual connection between memory, recollection, and the invention of arguments is central to comprehending one way of reading memory’s role in a rhetorical act beyond mnemonic cues and central to Aristotle’s rhetorical theory:

The idea that recollection, *memoria*, is itself a reasoning procedure, which makes use of orderly series of mental topics (places) for the procedure of investigation, is fundamental from antiquity onward both in dialectic and in rhetoric. In each of these linguistic arts, the compositional task requires invention (discover and recovery) of arguments, matters, and materials, which in turn derive their power and persuasion from the mental library one put away during the study of grammar.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Bruce Gronbeck, “The Spoken and the Seen,” 151.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> John Muckelbauer, *The Future of Invention: Rhetoric, Postmodernism, and the Problem of Change* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2008), 123.

<sup>80</sup> Mary Carruthers, *Aristotle on Memory*, 190.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*



Here Carruthers indicates how we might read the art of invention as inherently tied to classical notions of memory and recollection: By actively searching through images of the past in recollection, one can select the most appropriate starting point to build a claim from memory. Though Aristotle does not inherit Plato's conception of memory images being impressed onto a block of wax within the soul, he nevertheless maintains the essential *imaging* process that occurs when one inscribes events or objects in their imagination (*phantasia*). Aristotle's theory of memory and recollection introduces an orientation to remembrance that accounts both for the minute process of identifying a memory, as well as the parallel notion—or, Gronbeck might argue, bridge—between searching a series of images in recollection. “What when the memory itself loses something?” Augustine asked in Book Ten of his *Confessions*, quickly answering, “The only place to search is in the memory itself.”<sup>82</sup>

The richer relevance of Aristotle's distinction lies in what Paul Ricoeur summarizes as the line drawn between “the simple presence of memories and the act of recollection.”<sup>83</sup> If we consider another observation by Ricoeur that the “verb ‘to remember’ stands in for the substantive ‘memory,’”<sup>84</sup> we have drafted a continuum between an image of the past that is stable, sensory, and still, and a search for events and ideas past that is purposeful and deliberate. For Kendall Phillips, the distinction between memory and recollection is a site of struggle between competing conceptions of the past. By matching image to memory, Phillips has argued, Aristotle's theory positions

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<sup>82</sup> Augustine [trans. Henry Chadwick], *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1992]), 195.

<sup>83</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 56.

<sup>84</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 19.

recollection as arising in a “controlled way.”<sup>85</sup> Inheriting Aristotle’s distinction between sensory memory and deliberative recollection, Phillips has posited that conceptions of the past enter a communal framework under the aegis of three categories: “public memories,” or “the articulation of the images and fantasies of specific communities about aspects of the past”; “public remembrances,” or “the kind of dominant, reified, and calcified forms of remembrance” that establish the parameters of public memories; and “public recollection,” or “a site in which public memories are disciplined in relation to the framework of public remembrance and against which recalcitrant public memories” attempt to alter or correct.<sup>86</sup> Beyond Aristotle’s original distinction between memory and recollection, finally, Phillips argues that images take one of three major forms: between the emergence of memories (public memory) and the perpetual, calcified cultural forms and frameworks (public remembrance) of memory, there resides the struggle to establish new communal conceptions of the past (public recollection).<sup>87</sup>

Aristotle’s treatise, combined with contemporary observations and extensions of his original theory, productively furcate our conception of memory in order to analyze the Senate’s ritualistic embrace of the Farewell Address in both written and linguistic forms of expression alike. As I transition to formal analysis of repetition, my focus will become twofold. First, I consider the public embodiment of the Farewell Address repeated in perpetual fashion in the Senate. Next, I align a content analysis of the Senate’s notebook as it has evolved into an institutional palimpsest of memory since its

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<sup>85</sup> Kendall R. Phillips, “The Failure of Memory: Reflections on Rhetoric and Public Remembrance,” *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010), 215.

<sup>86</sup> Phillips, “The Failure of Memory,” 219.

<sup>87</sup> Phillips, “The Failure of Memory,” 220.

origin in 1900. Both the bodily display of the text repeated and the increasingly elaborate reflections of its meaning take on a consequential form in both spoken and written discourse. The interaction between speech and writing, finally, becomes a major point of contention as we evaluate the Senate's repetitive return to the Farewell Address and the search for an extensional life of reading within this political community.

#### MEMORY: LOCATING A PERPETUAL DISPLAY OF THE TEXT

*"The wisdom contained in the Farewell Address is ageless; the admonitions remain as valid as the circumstances which then prevailed. To the degree those circumstances have changed, we must measure the advice of George Washington against the living facts of our own times. I shall always cherish and remember this occasion, when it was my [...] privilege to deliver Washington's historic address, in honor of his birthday to the Senate of the United States. (signed) Frank Church, February 21, 1958."*

What do we witness when we observe the Senate's yearly recital of the Farewell Address? As an invented institutional tradition, reciting the text functions as what Paul Connerton calls "rhetoric of re-enactment," or the repetitive act that sustains communal memory.<sup>88</sup> But what moment of history is being re-enacted? In oralizing a written text, the Senate's performance of the text grants Washington's Farewell Address a local, vocal, and immediate presence in a way it was not invested with as a written political testament. The repetition of Washington's speech is always a re-enactment of the previous year's ceremony, following the standard space, place, and time of Washington's birthday in the Senate chamber, never fully actualizing a lost moment of history since the text in question lives beyond any commitment to space or time. If, however, as Butler stated, responsibility for "reinvigorating" language is attributed to

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<sup>88</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 61-65.

“speech as repetition, not origination,”<sup>89</sup> the expressed vitality of the Farewell Address in the Senate presents a potentially stifling constitutive life. In the following analysis of the reading, I argue that the Senate’s yearly recital of the Farewell Address represents a bodily performance of memory that forges a relationship between text and place that did not previously exist, but that the potential for renewing the symbolic potency derived from repetition is stifled by the form of the ceremony, and the separation between speaking, writing, remembering, and recollecting that currently defines the practice.

“The past needs a maker of words, a poet or historian,” W. James Booth has noted, “to save its deeds from the oblivion of silence.”<sup>90</sup> “In invoking it, and giving it voice and remembrance,” he continues, “we answer its call.”<sup>91</sup> If forgetting is equated with silence, the Senate’s standing order of recitation ensures that George Washington’s Farewell Address will never lose its imprint on the deliberative body. Senators give voice to an otherwise silent text, enacting a rhetoric of display with several components. Yet, the extensional life afforded the Farewell Address has remained remarkably continuous in form and content. This Farewell Address is a constant performance of memory made verbal and visible, yet stylistically constant and stable.

The Senate gives the Farewell Address the voice in performance it never possessed as a written text. Public speech, Walter Ong has claimed, creates the potential for an “event,” whereas writing creates a circumstance of “isolated” and “consciously

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<sup>89</sup> Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 39.

<sup>90</sup> W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 67.

<sup>91</sup> W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory*, 67.

contrived” messages.<sup>92</sup> To lock one’s ideas into paper rather than let them drift and mingle in a collective conscious is to practice what Ong calls “individualized thought” in the use of language.<sup>93</sup> Papers and letters are not totally lost to the depths of individual consciousness, however. Throughout the nineteenth-century, Ong further explains, “it was taken for granted that a written text of any worth was meant to be...read aloud” to the public.<sup>94</sup> Once we account for the line between Washington’s call for sustained public virtue in 1796 in the Senate and the various members who have taken on a temporary second self in *prosopopoeia*, the Farewell Address inhabits a stable image of memory. Its repetition is an act of speech amid countless other recitations that inhabit the Senate: proposals for legislation, institutional journal entries, or calls for quorum, each of which call on fellow members to simply remain as they are—present or absent.

By conventional reasoning, space and public memory influence one another insomuch, Halbwachs stated, as groups “compose” a “fixed framework within which to enclose and retrieve remembrances.”<sup>95</sup> “Most groups,” Halbwachs stated, “engrave their form in some way upon the soil and retrieve their collective remembrances within the spatial framework thus defined.”<sup>96</sup> For the Senate, reciting the Farewell Address has become a means to deposit the memory of public discourse upon a common deliberative space in re-enactment. Like a museum or an archive, the Senate chamber is a place where the memory has been inscribed, and—through over a century of practice—now a local spatial association for the revered text. Instead of memories emerging from a

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<sup>92</sup> Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, 76, 81-83.

<sup>93</sup> Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, 150.

<sup>94</sup> Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, 113.

<sup>95</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 157.

<sup>96</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 156.

place, the memory of the Farewell Address is enlivened and proposed as fit to meld with the deliberative body in the deliberative space. Washington's voice is alive—and it lives in the Senate.

Though imbued within the spatial and temporal happenings of the Senate, the oralizing of Washington's Farewell Address have remained remarkably constant through decades of practice. Mary Carruthers offers further insight to the act of reading a text absent an extensional outlet. Summarizing Thomas of Waley's theory of memory and recitation, she suggested we may:

distinguis[h] between reciting and retaining and speaking; *recitare* is word-for-word repetition of a text *verbaliter*, whereas *retinere et dicere* is recollection *sententialiter* (according to the sense of its principal words) in order to facilitate composition. Reciting is what children do when first learning to read, but recollection is associated...with the investigative activities of invention and new composition, the tasks of rhetoric and poetry.<sup>97</sup>

The Senate's oralizing of speech constitutes a memory of Washington's text in the sense that the practice orients the text as a performative display in time and space, removing the shackled isolation of a printed text to localize the text within the Senate chamber. This imagining of Washington's words, however, is a constant, or to employ Aristotle's distinction, it is as a stable sense, established and, for the foreseeable future, ever-present. It facilitates a memory image of the text—a Senator's performed embodiment of the words—but little else. Memory is the text displayed as a constant re-enactment: recollection lives beyond a word-for-word recitation. Or, as Kendall Phillips' conception of memory and recollection suggests, permanent and isolated repetition positions the text as an established image of public remembrance. What is needed, then,

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<sup>97</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 235.

is an active and deliberate search within the text repeated to forge a new breath of life in public recollection.

Occasions wherein the recitation of the text is accompanied by some sort of additional remarks or cues to *read* the text are historically rare. Following the 1937 reading of the Farewell Address, for example, Senator Thomas (R-UT) began a debate on the divergent conclusions attributed to the text in the midst of plans to expand American foreign influence. “Laudable as the reading of the address is, it may become a perfunctory practice or it may result in an adherence to one-sided or at least sloganized deductions if we do not from time to time rehearse the real meaning of the address and the reasons for which it was written.”<sup>98</sup> “In a year like the present, when neutrality is on the minds of all, Washington’s defense of his own neutrality acts may be used to justify or to condemn a neutrality stand of the present,” Thomas continued, finding more use in debating the meaning of the text than listening to its recital: “This is hardly fair. It is the world of today that we must legislate for; not the world as it was in Washington’s day.”<sup>99</sup> Excerpts from the *Congressional Record* show that Senator Thomas’s interpretation of the Farewell Address in an open, communal discussion of its meaning is a rare fusion of epideictic observance and argumentative contestation. Thomas’s case is the exception. Senators are more likely to revert to the nineteenth century practice of commending the

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<sup>98</sup> *Congressional Record*, February 22, 1937, 1458.

<sup>99</sup> *Congressional Record*, February 22, 1937, 1459

“very fine” presentations of the text, with some Senators talking about the text by referring to their own experiences.<sup>100</sup>

How can the perpetual performance of the Farewell Address differ from the moment of ceremonial repetition addressed in the previous chapter? Speaking the words of Washington into the Old House of Representatives in 1862 positioned the text in local space and time, but presented an iteration that was alive to a moment of national and symbolic crisis. The memory of the text repeated, in other words, was directed, constrained, and molded by accompanying messages: a chaplain’s prayer, citizens’ petition, communal recitations, and, most importantly, the display of flags. The Senate, by contrast, has made the Farewell Address a synecdoche for Washington himself, not a particular element or idea expressed within the text that may be re-imagined differently in the present. The ritual of re-enactment is self-evident display: Washington’s voice lives in the Senate, and requires no explanation, application, or discernable screen that accepts, reflects, and deflects the memory of the text beyond its bodily and spatial display.<sup>101</sup>

From the above overview, it appears as though the U.S. Senate has come dramatically close to achieving the unattractive honor bequeathed to Zora in Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*: “forced to remain motionless and always the same, in order to be more easily remembered,” the city succumbs to being “languished, disintegrated,

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<sup>100</sup> See: *Congressional Record*, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1963, 2873; *Congressional Record*, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1982, 1776; *Congressional Record*, February 21, 1983, 2574; *Congressional Record*, February 21, 1977, S 2769; *Congressional Record*, February 18, 1985, 2352.

<sup>101</sup> See: Kenneth Burke, “Language as Action: Terministic Screens,” in *On Symbols and Society*, ed. Joseph R. Gusfield (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 115.



disappeared.”<sup>102</sup> Yet, each recital of the Farewell Address in the U.S. Senate in the past 70 years has *not* been the same. Indeed, individual Senators have taken great pains to indicate the scope of applicability that connections Washington’s text to the deliberative work of the Senate. Recollection occurs side-by-side with remembrance, the only caveat being that the former is hidden while the latter is public. In the following section, I explore the Senate’s hidden form of recollecting the Farewell Address by drawing out specific themes indicated in the chronicle of signatures and comments that further reinforce the separation between memory and recollection in the perennial performance of the Farewell Address.

#### RECOLLECTION: THE INSTIUTITONAL PALIMPSEST

*Feb. 22, 1963. It was a great honor and privilege for me to read Washington’s Farewell Address on the floor of the Senate. If our first President were alive to-day I believe he would: 1. Be steadfast in his devotion to the principles inherent in our Constitution; 2. Vigorously oppose pressure group activities detrimental to the general welfare; 3. Insist on sound fiscal politics; 4. Condemn any suggestions that the powers of the President should be significantly increased; and 5. Recognize that the luxury of isolation is no longer possible but that in formulating our relations with other nations the question must always be asked: Is this in the best interest of the United States of America? May our country be blessed with men possessing the vision and capacity to George Washington—now and in the future. (Signed) Winston L. Prouty, U.S.S. Vermont.*

As mentioned previously in this essay, the focus on the Senate’s notebook was not initially evident. Like a tool that goes unnoticed only to become essential to completing a task, the chronicle of signatures has transformed into a repository of recollection—a site in which readers clearly searched to find the meaning of Washington’s words within a present moment. The book represents something more, however. Within these pages resides a palimpsest of constitutive meaning attributed to the Farewell Address by a succession of Senators. Each new entry marks a new layer of

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<sup>102</sup> Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 16.

meaning wherein the previous page is updated and altered, yet remains as a fragment of a new whole.

Like previous instances of ceremonial repetition examined in this work, the Senate's choice of writing has important consequences to the extensional form of remembrance. The act of writing has garnered substantive attention in the history of rhetoric. Near the end of the classical dialogue *Phaedrus*, Socrates compares writing to the act of painting and concludes that a nobler dialectic is impossible when words committed to ink "cannot defend themselves" from a response.<sup>103</sup> To achieve a true dialectic, and preserve one's memory, the reasoning goes, speaking is the preferred mode of expressing thought. The suspicions about writing have waned in more than two millennia since Plato's text, especially since the introduction of new media, have introduced new points of contention on sources of information.

The virtues of writing are evident in a variety of critical appraisals. Oral communication carries the potential to "unit[e] people in groups, whereas writing and reading, by contrast, are "solitary activities that throw the psyche back on itself."<sup>104</sup> To lock one's ideas into paper rather than let them drift and mingle in a collective conscious is to practice what Ong calls "individualized thought" in one's use of language.<sup>105</sup> Paul Ricoeur credits writing with embodying "the meaning of the speech event, not the event

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<sup>103</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to Present*, 2nd edition, eds., Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Hertzberg (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2001), 166; a contemporary view of writing and social thought can be found in: Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 63.

<sup>104</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 68.

<sup>105</sup> Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 150.

as event”: “the noema of speech” is the essence captured in written texts.<sup>106</sup> Texts, furthermore, enables the “universalization” of the audience, meaning an act of reading is a “social phenomenon” wherein a text “creates its public.”<sup>107</sup> Writing does not have to wait for speech in order to constitute a public occasion; depth is inscribed.

Plato, Ong, and Ricoeur are not exclusive from one another. Each provides a sense by which the act of writing is both isolated as well as potentially universalized, and—perhaps most importantly—a reflection and transformation of language. This alteration between speech and writing is a familiar trend in this study, and represents one of the most elemental forms of *ekphrasis*. Plato’s metaphorical painting and Ong’s interiorized thought process meet on the ground of imagining the words of another, or, in W. J. T. Mitchell’s summary, “Writing makes language (in the literal sense) visible (in the literal sense).”<sup>108</sup> Though the act of *ekphrasis* is “impossible” in any literal or tangible sense, Mitchell nevertheless considers the phenomenon on two planes: “(1) the conversion of the visual representation into a verbal representation, either by description or ventriloquism; (2) the reconversion of the verbal representation back into the visual object in the reception of the reader.”<sup>109</sup> Arguably, the Senate’s tradition of oral recitation and written reflection has combined both elements of *ekphrasis* described by Mitchell. The Farewell Address is displayed as an image of memory, while the search for meaning is sought in isolation and transcribed through visible scrawling. We hear

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<sup>106</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 27.

<sup>107</sup> Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 31.

<sup>108</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 113.

<sup>109</sup> Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 152 and 164.

the Farewell Address, but must look inward to the notebook to understand what it means.

The term *palimpsest* has been used as a figurative description of the memory embedded in landscape or veiled practices, and the Senate's embrace of written memories invites the comparison in a more literal sense. The notebook functions to retain meaning while simultaneously adding layers of reflections. In this sense, it participates in the ritual as a palimpsest, or what Thomas De Quincey called "a membrane or roll cleansed of its manuscript by reiterated successions."<sup>110</sup> Palimpsests occupy a unique historical sensibility. Charles Morris III notes that a palimpsest is an object "of both erasure and recovery" with meaning is "created in the ruins of prior" exercises, while previous marks are not "destroyed or forgotten."<sup>111</sup> Derived from a Greek word meaning "to scrape again," the purposeful design of this tool for writing is to create a fresh text despite lingering traces of a prior sketching.<sup>112</sup> Associations between memory and books date back to ancient observations. As Mary Carruthers has noted, writers from Plato to Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian have likened memory to written text: "books are themselves memorial cues and aids, and memory is most like a book, a written page or a wax tablet upon which something is written."<sup>113</sup> Plato's

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<sup>110</sup> Thomas De Quincey, "The Palimpsest of the Human Brain," in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, New and Enlarged Edition: Volume XIII, Tales and Prose Phantasies*, ed. David Masson (New York: AMS Press, 1890), 341.

<sup>111</sup> Charles E. Morris III, "'The Responsibilities of the Critic': F.O. Matthiessen's Homosexual Palimpsest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1998): 266-268.

<sup>112</sup> Josephine McDonagh, "Writings on the Mind: Thomas De Quincey and the Importance of the Palimpsest in Nineteenth Century Thought," *Prose Studies*: 210.

<sup>113</sup> Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 18.

dialogue *Theaetetus* provides an elaborate description of this process and the imprinting of memory upon the soul.

Imagine...that our minds contain a block of wax, which in this or that individual may be larger or smaller, and composed of wax that is comparatively pure or muddy, and harder in some, softer in other, and sometimes of just the right consistency ... Let us call it the gift of the Muses' mother, memory, and say that whenever we wish to remember something we see or hear or conceive in our own minds, we hold this wax under perceptions or ideas and imprint them on it as we might stamp the impression of a seal ring. Whatever is so imprinted we remember and know so long as the image remains; whatever is rubbed out or has not succeeded in leaving an impression we have forgotten and do not know.<sup>114</sup>

The sealing of a wax tablet, with bookend slabs of wood for support, was a common form of writing well known to Greek culture. The process of imprinting text or images onto a wax-like substance within the soul is repeated in Aristotle's mediation of memory (*De Memoria*), as well as Cicero's description of remembering via "images in the localities" written "by means of letters on a wax tablet," and later writings by extending to Augustine.<sup>115</sup> The persistence of the wax tablet metaphor was—and is—Carruthers argues, "remarkable" in its persistence.<sup>116</sup>

Applying the palimpsest perspective to anthropological archeology, Geoff Bailey has convincingly suggested a multitude of temporal orientations that highlight the omnipresence of a palimpsest sensibility in a range of analytical objects. A "Temporal palimpsests," Bailey writes, is "an assemblage of materials and objects that form part of the same deposit but are of different ages and 'life' spans."<sup>117</sup> Elaborating on the general

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<sup>114</sup> Quoted in Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 24.

<sup>115</sup> Cicero [trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse], *On the Ideal Orator* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 221; Saint Augustine [trans. Henry Chadwick], *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1992]), 188-189.

<sup>116</sup> Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 27.

<sup>117</sup> Geoff Bailey, "Time Perspectives, Palimpsests and the Archeology of Time," *Journal of Anthropological Archeology* 26 (2007): 207. Sarah Dillon, in kind, has recommended the adjective "palimpsestuous," referring to not only the *making* of a layered object, but to the "complex (textual) relationality embodied in the palimpsest." See: "Reinscribing De Quincey's Palimpsest: The

applicability of the palimpsest perspective, Bailey argues that “the meaning of an object, whether we study it in isolation or in the context of other materials” invites the “palimpsest effect,” which, he states meaning approaching the object as “a result of the different uses, contexts of use and associations to which they have been exposed from the original moment of manufacture to their current resting place, whether in the ground, a museum, a textbook, and intellectual discourse, or indeed as objects still in circulation and use.”<sup>118</sup> Few objects of the material world escape a view of understanding the “differential duration” by which it has evolved.<sup>119</sup> For the Senate’s chronicle of signatures, however, the sensibility is an ideal fit [See Figure 5].

The book is a chronicle of the extensional life of the Farewell Address in the nation’s foremost deliberative institution. Repetition in the Senate chamber *displays* the text, but does not attempt an active search to *recollect* the text. This distinction can be understood in Aristotle’s *Memoria et Reminscia*, wherein the act of memory is closely defined to all animals who can impress an image of their surroundings in their mind; recollection is the active, deliberate search for something of one’s past. Herein the Senate’s chronicle of blank pages constitutes an institutional palimpsest of recollection: a process of remembrance that shifts and shapes the Farewell Address as memory applied to the present. In other words, the Senate’s recitation of the Farewell Address has inverted the traditional relationship between memory and recollection introduced by Aristotle and elaborated by Gronbeck and other theorists. Memory—the image of the

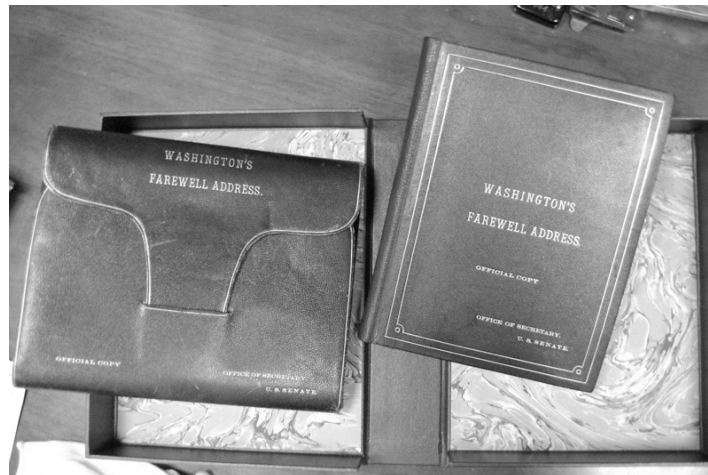
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Significance of the Palimpsest in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Studies,” *Textual Practice* 19 (3) (2005): 244-245.

<sup>118</sup> Geoff Bailey, “Time Perspectives, Palimpsests and the Archeology of Time,” 209.

<sup>119</sup> Geoff Bailey, “Time Perspectives, Palimpsests and the Archeology of Time,” 209.

past—is displayed in the act of reading; recollection—the active search of communal knowledge—is composed in a shared palimpsest of remembrance, composed in seclusion and locked away from view, but nevertheless recording the deliberative search for the meaning of the memory. What sort of recollection does the text hold? Further, what does this peculiar practice indicate within the context of ceremonial repetition and the process of extending the constitutive meaning of Washington’s Farewell Address? As we trace the Senate’s increased effort to pull the Farewell Address into its cloakroom corridor, we are also witnessing its attempt to modify and renew the effect of the address in its ever-changing second life. Our point of entry must begin with the text itself, then pull back and consider the larger implications of the Senate’s process of displaying memory and concealing recollection.



**FIGURE 5** The Senate’s Institutional Palimpsest. *Photograph property of the author.*

*"February 24th, 1993. To read the words of our nation's first president on the floor of the U.S. Senate is a distinct honor. The fact that his words were written as a guiding light for the future of this nation makes the actual moment of the delivery of the speech timeless. Thank goodness this has become a tradition because as citizens we must never lose our exposure and connection to the principles of wisdom of our founding fathers. The fact that Madison, Hamilton, and Jay all contributed to this speech reflects the sentiment of this group of dedicated patriots. God bless America! (signed) Dirk Kempthorne, USS Idaho."*

### *The Euphoria of Reading*

By proximity and association, it is not surprising to see a recurring theme of Washington's relevancy to the Senate emerge through Senators' written reflections. The transition from different decades of practice, however, illustrates key observations on what participants in this ritual perceive as the connection between the past and the present and the fluid nature of a prolonged repetition and the constitutive alteration of the text as it relates to the Senate's existence. It seems natural, provided this localizing of the text, that Senators participating in the ritual would associate the values and ideals of the Farewell Address to their own actions: Senators see their actions embodying the ideals of Washington. Yet, this transition was slow to start. Indeed, the Farewell Address notebook wasn't used outside of a name recognition log until mid-way through the twentieth-century. Senators read Washington's parting message through the tumultuous and significant episodes of American public life, including women's suffrage, two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the dropping of atomic bombs, not to mention significant political movements toward labor rights and other political interests. Through this, the Senate remained silent by word and pen absent the words printed in the original address. Following Senator Margaret Chase Smith's (R-ME) pondering of how Washington would view efforts to unite North Atlantic nations into a potential



“entangling alliance,” however, the notebook becomes more than a register of the Farewell Address. It is the site of transcendental rhetoric with the potential to engage through written expression.

Mouthing the words of Washington has meant, for some Senators, a spiritual euphoria. Several readers have been moved to attest to the temporal suspension that exists within the performance. While reading the text, Senator John Rockefeller (D-WV) wrote in 1986, “one is carried back in spirit to the first years of this great nation,” continuing, “One feels, in reading his words aloud, the urgency of love and concern he felt for the fragile young nation.” Senator Ralph Flanders (R-VT) went even further when he wrote, “A careful reading discovers its wisdom as no recital of words taken out of context can do.” For Flanders, the Farewell Address is, as other readers such as Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) have suspected, not only “immortal and enduring,” but also accessible in performance. “Indeed, for a few moments, half way through the address, it was as if ‘these councils of an old and affectionate friend’ had come alive!” Bill Frist (R-TN) wrote in 1997. Lack of audience is no lack of experience. As we will note later in this analysis, the felt connection between a Senator and the Farewell Address has factored greatly in the habits of reading and remembering Washington’s text in the Senate.

#### *Change From Washington: Relevance of the Farewell*

Following the 1949 reading by Senator Chase, several Senators throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s present a world of contrast to the themes of the Farewell Address and consider the text a corrective measure of political guidance. Exceptions

exist, to be sure. Frank Moss (D-UT), for instance, wrote in 1960 how Washington's words "retain their vigor," elaborating that the "course he charted has served us well and we are today the great united and powerful nation of which he spoke." James Pearson (R-KS), offered a bland assessment of the address, noting a "hope that the words of Washington—heard again in the Senate of the United States," will serve the "purpose" of understanding the past to plan for the future.

Other Senator's, however, have taken the Farewell with less optimistic points of view. Though some Senators found it fitting to read the Farewell Address not only on Washington's Birthday, but "in the Senate," in Prescott Bush's (R-CT) words, others have offered more pointed contrasts between the principles perceived in the text and the reality of the present. Reading the Farewell affirms Senator Goldwater's (R-AZ) belief in 1957 that the "troubles of mind and conscience" in the U.S. can be alleviated with "documents left to us" by the founding generation, foremost among them Washington's text. Frank Church (D-IN) defined the Farewell Address as a set of "admonitions" that remain "ageless," that the people must measure "against the living facts of our own times." For Gordon Allott (R-CO), Washington's Farewell Address was sage advice for a moment "when the mind of the people seems confused and even frustrated" in the present. "His advice with respect to the dominance of Party over Union as never more appreciable than today," Allott continued. In more pointed contrast, Winston Prouty (R-VT), writing in 1963, perhaps responding to the Cuban Missile Crisis six months prior, contrasts the current political context with the belief that, were Washington alive, he would, among other things, "[r]ecognize that the luxury of isolation is no longer possible

but that in formulating our relations with other nations the question must be asked: is this in the best interest of the United States of America?” Even when Washington’s principles are revised to a new ideology, his words clash with modern occurrences.

Political unity also becomes a key concern for Senators writing soon after the mid-twentieth century turn toward elaborated interpretation of the text. Senator Lee Metcalf (D-MT), writing in 1966, dismisses the idea that the text embodies a vision “against foreign entanglements” and instead reads the central theme as “national unity,” an especially important observation in an age of “strife over civil rights”: “This wise advice,” he continues, alluding to political unity, “is to be heeded.” Religion and government is also a key concern in some of the early decades of the Senate’s elaborated form of commemoration through writing: “[W]hen Washington talks about religion,” Senator Hayakawa (R-CA) penned in 1977, “it seems to me he was better able than any political leader living today to appeal to common understandings, common assumptions about morality and duty such as existed in his time but exist precariously, if at all, today.” Lastly, the morality of political actors is read from the address, especially in moments when political virtue is in question. In the fallout of the Iran-Contra investigation in 1987, newly elected Senator John McCain (R-AZ) noted the contrast from Washington’s advice to the happenings in the present, defining the Farewell Address in a prescriptive light: “closer adherence to his words is the surest path to a restored institution of the presidency and a renewal of faith of the American people in their system of government.” What has been lost—or separated from the purity of the text—may be reunited with reverence to Washington’s model.

These examples illustrate the common theme throughout the initial decades of reading and writing Washington through commemoration that apply the relevancy of the ‘Farewell’ by drawing a contrast to the needs of the present. In contradiction to this original theme early in the ritual’s mid-twentieth-century turn, more contemporary practice finds a repetitive turn to *confirm* the actions of the present as in-conjunction with the ideals of Washington, and indeed, the founding generation.

*Continuity With Washington: Relevance of the Farewell*

Contrary to the reflection that Washington may *doubt* the actions of the present in the previous section, recent decades of reading the Farewell Address in the Senate reflect a stronger sway to affirm either the importance of the present as a continuation of the past, or as the problems faced in the present as holding strong relevance to the ideals of Washington. Indeed, the oft-repeated line throughout the Farewell Address notebook is summarized in Walter Huddleston’s (D-KY) 1978 claim that “the wisdom” of the text “is just as certain today as when originally delivered.” Craig Thomas’ (R-WY) 1995 recital, fast on the heels of the 1995 Republican Party mid-term election, suspected Washington’s implicit approval in the new majority: “In a time when the American people have sent us to this place with a mandate for a smaller government more responsible to the need of its citizens—we are in this speech reminded of ideals and principles that lead us down the path of democracy.” No misunderstanding of the Farewell Address—interpreted or not—could strike a chord further from the author’s intention. Within this trend, political occurrences in the present are read anew through

the Farewell Address, given a new legitimacy, and tied back to the original formation of government.

Surviving national controversies are not immune from a sustained connection and continuation of Washington's ideals. In both the early Watergate fallout of 1973 as well as the post-Clinton impeachment trial of 1999, both Senators Charles Mathias (R-MD) and George Voinovich (R-OH) cited Washington's ideals of law and order in making the present matter to the past. Though "clearly dated," Mathias' recitation of the Farewell Address prompted the American ideal that "government of law" and "accepted rules" still matters, observations no doubt influenced by Nixon's recent resignation. Judgment of a president, though difficult, is affirmed through a reading of the Farewell. Similarly, Voinovich rationalized the recent impeachment trial of President Clinton by noting that Washington's emphasis on oaths of office remains relevant in 1999: "The oaths of judicial system he [Washington] refers to were the basis of the recent United States Senate Trial on the Articles of Impeachment against President Clinton." Clinton's trial by the Senate may seem to be a stretch for readers of the 1796 text, but not the only theme affirmed in contemporary practice. "I suspect [Washington] would be shocked at the role that the United States plays today in maintaining world peace—that the nation he helped found is the most powerful in the world," Voinovich added. Political vitriol forgotten, Washington's vision is still embodied in the trials of a President, albeit through a new focus on *which* ideals remain central to the reading.

Recent readings of the address have also shown a consistent turn toward acknowledging the relevance of Washington without indulging specific elements of the

text of Washington's ideals. Writing in 1997, Bill Frist (R-TN) saw the importance of the Farewell Address in Washington's vision of "restraint, balance, justice, self-imposed term-limits," as relevant in the present day: "As I read aloud, the words, I was moved by the expressed spirit of liberty which has flourished over the past 200 years," Frist added. Following the events of 11 September 2001, John Corzine's (D-NJ) 2002 reading of the address culminates in the belief that, "[l]ike Washington and his fellow citizens," Americans would have to work toward their freedom. The nation "must remember," Corzine writes, interpreting the message in light of the tragedy on 9/11/2001, "that our freedom isn't free." "America is a great and free nation because of leaders like Washington and his words are still inspiring," Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) wrote one year later, alluding to nothing specific. When events are elaborated upon, such as when Senator John Breaux (D-LA) wrote in 2004, the application to political issues and situations remain vague, often clouding the intended advice and warning of the Farewell Address to affirm the present: "I think Washington would be proud of America today as he was in 1796 A.D."

From artifact of admonition to an articulation of American pride, Washington's Farewell Address has been made especially malleable through over a century of recitation in the U.S. Senate. While themes of congruity and clash that define the temporal relationship between the political culture of the Senate and Washington's political testament are important, the final observation of this analysis is the most important to crafting a judgment on the Senate's ceremonial repetition of the text. In

both recent decades and before, the theme of continuity with the Farewell Address has taken a new form of expression for reciters and writers: a focus on the personal.

*The Farewell Address as Individual Experience*

Washington's text has spurred reflections of both association and dissociation in decades of recitation. Both recent and historical trends of the Senate's palimpsest include, however, the prominent preoccupation with the reader's experience as the channel of the Farewell Address, pervading the decades of practice, particularly in the last twenty years of recitations. The personal focus of the reading has not always been a sense of selfish interest. "It was a great honor to have been asked to read these historic words," wrote Elbert Thomas (R-UT) in 1944, "I appreciate deeply the honor the Senate has thus done me." A similar tone of grateful thanks pervades entries through the 1950s, though such content is later replaced with a more purposeful inward turn of written reflection. Frank Church (D-IN) noted he would "cherish and remember this occasion" when he was given the "privilege to deliver Washington's historic address, in honor of his birthday, to the Senate of the United States."

For others, however, the honor was personal in a sense beyond one's association to the Senate. "Today has been a truly significant one for me!" wrote Jennings Randolph in 1962. Being "the second West Virginian" to have read the text was an important note for Randolph, whose entire entry is dedicated to the presence of his son and staff in the galleries as he read the text. Randolph's focus on state identity marks a noteworthy chapter of more recent writings. Senators Frist (R-TN, 1997), Chambliss (R-GA, 2003), Burr (R-NC, 2005), Corker, (R-TN, 2007), Pryor (D-AR, 2008), Johanns (R-

NE, 2009), and Burris (D-IL, 2010), each underscored the honor of the speaking the address in the context of how many previous state representatives had preceded them. “I understand that I am the first senator from Arkansas to read this address as part of this Senate tradition,” wrote Pryor (D-AR) in 2008, further noting, “That surprises me since there have been so many strong senators from my state over the years—Robinson, McClellan, Fulbright, Bumpers, Donald Pryor, and Lincoln—to name just a few. Knowing I am the first makes this honor all the more special to me.” “It has been 60 years since an Ohioan Robert Taff read Washington’s Farewell Address,” George Voinovich (R-OH) began his entry in 1999. “I am carrying on a Tennessee tradition,” wrote Bob Corker (R-TN), making a rare allusion to the 1862 reading by penning, “It was Tennessee Senator Andrew Johnson who first introduced the petition in the Senate as a morale boosting gestures during the Civil War,” further listing home-state readers prior to 2007. From the brief remarks of thankfulness and reverence to procedure, these contemporary compliments to one’s position relative to individual state histories add a new shape to the recollection process beyond an institutional or political community.

The individual, not the traditional reverence or the institution, occupy written reflections in more ways than one. Senators Moseley-Braun (D-IL) and Akaka (D-HI), writing in 1994 and 1996, respectively, each pay tribute to their their status as the first African-American and “senator of Native Hawaiian and Chinese descent” to have read the address. This sentiment is echoed in similar expressions. “As the third Illinoisian to read Washington’s Farewell Address before this chamber and [also] a great grand son of a slave, I am deeply honored to share this historic message with my colleagues,” wrote



Roland Burris (D-IL) in 2010, further noting the importance of the tradition as a way to “reflect upon the things that all Americans hold dear—liberty, equality, justice, and patriotism.” Personal honor and reflection on the self’s role in commemoration is expressed, finally, in Jake Garn’s (R-UT) 1975 contribution to the institutional palimpsest, quoted in full as follows:

I have been greatly honored to be asked to present to the Senate George Washington’s Farewell Address. I am especially pleased due to the fact that I am a direct descendant of George Washington’s youngest Brother [,] Charles Washington. My paternal grandmothers maiden name was Martha Virginia Washington and my great grandfathers[’], Charles Augustine Washington. He was a great, great, great, great grandson of George’s youngest full brother. Because of the relationship to the Washington family it was a great thrill to present president Washington’s Farewell Address.

Few entries achieve the level of profound absurdity of Senator Garn’s entry, though his exclusive focus on his role in the ceremony underscores the emergence of the Senate’s palimpsest as a mode of reflecting then ritual as a mode of self-actualization or affirmation, detached in focus from the social frameworks of collective remembrance that function to direct how public memory takes form with varying points of emphasis to comprehend the present.

One can scarcely imagine how the recitation of George Washington’s Farewell Address in the U.S. Senate would alter in its display and performance if the above recollections of the text were seriously incorporated into the act of public remembrance. Were Senators to recite the Farewell Address and attempt to direct the meaning of the text toward regional state pride, the legislative agenda, or any myriad of issues that may or may not contradict the advice of public virtue outlined in the text, we may gain a better sense of how the Farewell Address is being transformed through practice. As a political community, the Senate may benefit from knowing what is inside the book, too.

According to Senate Historian Betty Koed, the notebook is housed in the Senate Disbursing Office, literally locked away within the institution's walls, only to be brought out once per year for the ceremonial reading of the text.<sup>120</sup> In its current practice the form of display and rote recitation speaks only to a relationship between the deliberative body and the first president, giving viewers a sense of calm waters marked by constancy. Should the waves churning beneath the surface in the pages of the institutional palimpsest become seriously incorporated in commemoration, we could gauge the richer sense of how the text's extensional life is constituted. As the practice remains today, however, our image of memory remains thin—spoken into space and time with little symbolic effort to guide interpretations, while the written act of recollection remains incredibly thick—revealing a reading experience that constitutes institutional deviation and extension of Washington's council, as well as the growing habitude of the Senate to remember a past absent a communal sensibility, by oneself for oneself.<sup>121</sup>

#### IMPLICATIONS: THICKENING THE TEXT AS MEMORY

*"For all our citizens who are served by our Senate, I am incredibly honored to have been able to read George Washington's Farewell Address to the People of the United States. So much that President Washington said in his address is still relevant today. Our nation is incredibly fortunate to have had Washington's leadership in founding the country. I hope that all of us who serve in the Senate—especially myself—will work hard to do justice to his spirit.  
(signed) Sen. Jeanne Shaheed (NH), Feb. 27, 2012."*

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<sup>120</sup> Personal correspondence with the author, 27 February 2012.

<sup>121</sup> Wirls and Wirls summarize the recent evolution of Senate culture in the following way: "The modern Senate is defined by the combination of election-sensitive issue entrepreneurs (not unlike in the House) with a set of institutional norms and rules that allow and even encourage the exploitation of individual and minority interests (quite unlike the House). In this way the final irony of the Senate's development is that it has become the ultimate perversion of the Madisonian intention: a Senate with greatly reduced electoral independence coupled with the enshrined ability to use the institution for purely individual (as opposed to collective) purposes—to be potentially exploited, moreover, by entrepreneurs elected for six years and often from relatively small states." See: Wirls and Wirls, *The Invention of the Senate*, 213-214.

In his concise and thoughtful work *The Vindication of Tradition*, Jaroslav Pelikan notes the central function past voices possess in prompting future insight and progress. Pelikan states, “By including the dead in the circle of discourse, we enrich the quality of the conversation.”<sup>122</sup> Such an inclusion is fundamental to not only maintaining a sense of communal reflection on the past, but of enlivening reverence for the dead. “Tradition,” Pelikan famously summarizes, “is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”<sup>123</sup> The basis of such a relationship with the dead—and the combination of voices in a *circle of discourse*—is always an inherited gift thrust upon the living. Or, as John Durham Peters has written, “In dialogue with the dead...the speaker must hold up both ends of the conversation.”<sup>124</sup> What sort of conversation has the U.S. Senate upheld with the voice and words of Washington? The answer, like all messages, varies by context.

As this study has suggested, the most relevant component of this peculiar mode of remembrance is the distinction between public display of memory and the private expression of recollection. Though the Senate succeeds in forging a symbolic marriage between its members, its institution, and a local voice of the text, the extensional character of the discourse remains largely unaltered inasmuch as the recollection—or expression of public knowledge of the text—remains secluded. The conversation with Washington’s voice, in other words, *is* one-sided in the sense that the oralizing of the text does not meet a public counterpart to direct or constrain its meaning. Within the

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<sup>122</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 81.

<sup>123</sup> Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition*, 65.

<sup>124</sup> John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 152.

context of public memory studies, the Senate's ritual of repetition appears to be dangerously close to imitating a dream-state. As repetition of the Farewell Address continues, attendance remains abysmal, and the interior perspective of recollection is both invented and directed to a single consciousness, the Senate's practice flirts with maintaining a political community through epideictic messages traded in intimacy. As Halbwachs summarized, privatized re-enactments forge a moment that is "based only upon itself," like the fragments of collective frameworks floating amid our individual dreams, "whereas our recollections depend on those of our fellows, and on the great frameworks of the memory of society."<sup>125</sup>

The Farewell is read aloud to all, but *understood* and *remembered*, and *rationalized* to the present through internal reflection. Herein lies our glimpse to the institutional philosophy of discourse in the United States Senate. The reading of the 1796 text distances the interactive and interpretive process from a collective or public view in favor of the private reflection, similar to the internal turn of rhetorical theory under George Campbell. According to Thomas Miller, this shift in rhetoric and moral philosophy moved "from the sociological to the psychological, and rhetoric became more concerned with the workings of the individual consciousness."<sup>126</sup> Such a turn in commemorative form, as is apparent from the historical and institutional transitions in remembering Washington's Farewell Address, coincides with several commentators of the Senate's evolving character. Ross Baker, among others, has noted that based on

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<sup>125</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 42.

<sup>126</sup> Thomas P. Miller, repeat citation? *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces* (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 216.

institutional size and protocol alone, the Senate remains distinctive from other government bodies (such as the House of Representatives) inasmuch as its procedures “magnify the role of the individual senator.”<sup>127</sup> As future transitions in institutional identity emerge, the connection between Senate protocol and uses of discourse should be explored more fully and elaborated in more detail.

All of the above conclusions and implications are, in a strange way, repeating Washington’s original observation of the Senate’s institutional function with regards to legislation. While George Washington’s own opinions on the Senate are open to interpretation, one story of his personal view carries rich precedence. In the oft-repeated fable, Washington and Thomas Jefferson engage in conversation on the merits of the country’s new deliberative body: “Jefferson asks George Washington why he consented to the idea of a Senate. ‘Why did you pour that coffee into your saucer?’ asks Washington. ‘To cool it,’ replies Jefferson. ‘Even so,’ replies Washington, ‘we pour legislation into the Senatorial body to cool it.’”<sup>128</sup> As with legislation, the Senate’s transcendence of speech and meaning speak to a longer process of applying proclaimed reverence to the Farewell. Such an interior, self-congratulating focus, however, begs more questions on the essential importance of the rhetorical form of the deliberative body’s commemoration. When personal reflection of the Farewell Address turns inward and, by consequence, moves the discursive construction of communal memory toward the institutional and personal self, the Senate takes on the public voice of Washington

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<sup>127</sup> Ross Baker, *The House and the Senate* (New York: Norton, 2008), 48.

<sup>128</sup> Quoted in Nicol C. Rae and Colton C. Campbell, *The Contentious Senate: Partisanship, Ideology, and the Myth of Cool Judgment* (New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2001), xi.

while only clandestinely participating in its extensional effect. Such commemorative form, we should hope, extends and enriches the second life of the Farewell Address, and takes measures to invigorate its public memory, not to cool it.

According to historian Richard Baker, the Senate is an institution wherein “[c]hange comes slowly.”<sup>129</sup> Provided the House of Representatives sustained a similar reading of the Farewell Address through the 1970s until the practice was discontinued because “nobody showed up,” speaks to the Senate’s unique role as the sole government institution purposefully and proudly embracing Washington’s 1796 text.<sup>130</sup> A slowness to change, however, does not mean an intransigence to change. In 2004 the Secretary of the Senate moved to upload a bulk of the Senate’s palimpsest online, ensuring that past reflections of Senators (only those who have retired) are available through the Senate webpage.<sup>131</sup> Though still disconnected from the process of ceremonial repetition, a majority of the pages are public. Now public, these concentrated artifacts of recollection remain distant from the act of reading the text in the present, making a connection between speaking and writing a difficult challenge to surmount. Through technology, our insight into the dynamics of repetition has expanded. As I turn to the next chapter of analysis, I raise additional questions on the influence of technology on the art of ceremonial repetition. However the future of ceremonial repetition evolves, this study supports the growing conclusion that the memory of a text cannot live on repetition

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<sup>129</sup> Richard Baker, *Traditions of the United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: Senate Office of Printing and Document Services, 2007), 1.

<sup>130</sup> *New York Times*. “Washington Farewell Address Gets Apathetic Adieu in House,” February 17th, 1980, p. 18.

<sup>131</sup> Dr. Betty Koed, Associate Historian of the U.S. Senate. Personal Correspondence with the author, 27 February 2012.

alone, but instead requires a symbolic marriage of sorts—a translation from memory to recollection—that alters and constrains the meaning of a text to comfortably reside in a new space and time. This is a sensitive requirement, and—the Senate’s example notwithstanding—a rhetorical task worth pursuing.

## CHAPTER VI

### NETWORKING THE TEXT:

#### A NEW FACE OF CEREMONIAL REPETITION

*I propose the hypothesis that the network society is characterized by the breaking down of the rhythms, either biological or social, associated with the notion of a life-cycle.*

—Manuel Castells<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION: *NO CASINO GETTYSBURG*

Sometimes a single voice is not enough. Between autumn 2010 and spring 2011, a contentious debate unfolded in southern Pennsylvania on a proposed plan to build a casino and resort near the Gettysburg National Military Park. Each side proposed different ways to “save” the city and adjoining Civil War battlefield. For local philanthropist David LeVan, the solution was a proposed “Mason-Dixon Resort & Casino” to be located a half-mile from the battle site and memorial. The plan met criticism, and, in the early months of 2011, was ultimately rejected by the Pennsylvania Gaming Board.<sup>2</sup> The debate centered on perceptions of authenticity. Proponents saw a solution to a troubled, small-town economy. Opponents charged the development would tarnish the most sacred space of civil religion. Perspectives spilled out in speeches, editorial essays, and public demonstrations. In a noteworthy editorial supporting the casino plan, the *Harrisburg Patriot News* argued the development—though not ideal—was no real change to the cocoon of commodity that already surrounds the historic

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<sup>1</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society—The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture, Volume I, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, 476.

<sup>2</sup> Laura Bly, “No Dice: Gaming Board Rejects Gettysburg Casino,” *USA Today*, 14 April 2010, [<http://travel.usatoday.com/destinations/dispatches/post/2011/04/gettysburg-pa-casino-gambling-license-civil-war-/155900/1>].



space: “Down the road from where Gen. George Picket made his bloody charge,” the paper wrote, “there are gift shops that sell Gettysburg general shot glasses, Abe Lincoln bobbleheads and commemorative beer pocket coolies and bikini underwear,” all of which are smaller fragments next to larger restaurants “named after famous Civil War figures” and the “cottage industry of ghost tours” profiting from fables of dead soldiers.<sup>3</sup> How would opponents of the plan convey the sanctity of public space?

Surprisingly, Lincoln’s own words became part of the most sophisticated appeal in the debate on whether or not to build a casino near Gettysburg. The *No Casino Gettysburg Network*, a collaboration of local and national voices opposed to the plan, produced a litany of videotexts testifying to the virtues of Gettysburg as sacred space, and the downfall of commercial development in the area. Voices like documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, popular historian David McCullough, and Susan Eisenhower (granddaughter of the former president, and resident of Gettysburg) lent credence to the space as an iconic, irreplaceable, and vulnerable treasure of high status.<sup>4</sup> The group produced short films interspersed with interviews from well-known opponents that featured monuments and landscape from the battle site. Selections from John Williams’s score of *Saving Private Ryan* added dramatic effect.<sup>5</sup> One film, however, stands out among others. Dispensing with claims or informed historical testimony, producers created a recitation of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address divided among several readers and

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<sup>3</sup> *Harrisburg Patriot News*, “Gettysburg Casino Should Get Final Resort License,” 5 December 2010, accessed from [[http://www.pennlive.com/editorials/index.ssf/2010/12/gettysburg\\_you\\_bet\\_anti-casino.html](http://www.pennlive.com/editorials/index.ssf/2010/12/gettysburg_you_bet_anti-casino.html)] on 1 May 2012.

<sup>4</sup> *No Casino Gettysburg Network*, homepage at [<http://nocasinogettysburg.ning.com/>]

<sup>5</sup> *USA Today*, “Gettysburg Casino Opponents Make Last-Minute Video Appeals,” 7 December 2010. Accessed from [<http://travel.usatoday.com/destinations/dispatches/post/2010/12/gettysburg-casino-opponents-make-last-minute-video-appeals/133894/1>] on 1 May 2012.

intercut with both historical and contemporary scenes of the memorial site. The result was a tele-visual reimagining of the text, a repetition for the digital age. As an oral exercise, this Gettysburg Address featured only small literal deviations from Lincoln's original text. The new battle for Gettysburg was a rhetorical—not military—contest. Raising Lincoln's voice seemed an insurmountable defense of sacred space.

Lincoln's masterpiece has been equally admired and adaptable.<sup>6</sup> Rhetorical critic Edwin Black called the speech a compelling artifact for its "prismatic" quality: "its fires are somehow both protean and integral."<sup>7</sup> Sociologist Barry Schwartz has situated the text as a "verbal totem" by which communities negotiate their attachments, values, and concerns by re-reading Lincoln's words.<sup>8</sup> Multiple ideological movements—even historians—have read Lincoln's text outside its original function as an encomium of national rebirth by positioning it next to a range of twentieth-century movements, such as progressivism, suffrage, and civil rights.<sup>9</sup> *No Casino Gettysburg* adopts the address for its own sake, but does so in a way that ushers own attention to a new form of reading accurately described as a networking of the text. The production invites a familiar conclusion for a new situation. As Merrill Peterson claimed, Lincoln's status as "the Christian archetype" of American civil religion designated his 1863 speech at

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<sup>6</sup> In the most enduring reading of the text to date, Garry Wills has argued that Lincoln's speech was "an authoritative expression of the American experience—as authoritative as the Declaration itself, and perhaps even more influential, since it determines how we read the declaration." See, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Changed America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 147.

<sup>7</sup> Edwin Black, "Gettysburg and Silence" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 22.

<sup>8</sup> Barry Schwartz, "Rereading the Gettysburg Address" *Qualitative Sociology* 19 (1996): 415.

<sup>9</sup> Barry Schwartz, "The New Gettysburg Address: Fusing History and Memory" *Poetics* 33 (2005): 66-69.

Gettysburg as a “prophetic text.”<sup>10</sup> Instead of arguing that Lincoln’s call for “a rebirth of freedom” should be interpreted for a new cause, the 2010 video recital implies that we can understand what to do with the Gettysburg memorial by juxtaposing of the words of the text with resonant images of the battlefield. In other words, viewers were invited to see how the answer to the question of development was lodged in Lincoln’s words. Only by reimagining the original meaning could this relationship meet public display. The result is a splintering effect not only on what is seen, but also on what is heard. Six participants lend voice to the text, and within two and a half minutes the identity of the speaker alternates twenty-three times, with many more visual transitions designed to accompany the progression of the speech. Any recital could attempt to reproduce or re-enact the Gettysburg Address as Lincoln delivered it. In the midst of a debate on whether or not a casino venture would tarnish the authenticity of sacred space, *No Casino Gettysburg* utilized this production to refute the exploitation of sacred soil while implying the immediate intimacy of Lincoln’s words reimagined [See Figure 6].

*No Casino Gettysburg*’s take of Lincoln’s address invites the inference that Lincoln’s speech can reconcile the controversy over the casino development. To achieve this conclusion, the video is organized around contrasting visions of past and present strategically intersecting voices and images in the pacing and flow of the text. The film begins with a scenic black and white photo of rural landscape that dissolves into recently unearthed photographs of Lincoln at the 1863 dedication at Gettysburg, and, finally, to a close perspective of Lincoln in a sitting position, which finally transitions to an image of

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<sup>10</sup> Merrill Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 361.

the first reader, Sam Waterston. Lincoln's original summary of the nation's principle that "all men are created equal" is thrice repeated for effect, timed with images of white and black regiments of the Union army, adding visual and verbal significance to egalitarian race relations. The production updates the conflict in question—not one of equality or geographic distinctions, but the conflict of authentic space.

A second scenic view, like that which begins the film, updates the vision and meaning of the words repeated. This is a contemporary setting represented with a color-image of a rural farmhouse and truck moving down a road, much like the landscape shot that began the film. The distance between past and present is bridged through the associated images timed with the progress of the text. Two scenic shots invite viewers to recognize the past history of the Gettysburg Address (timed with the first black-and-white image of landscape), while viewing the contemporary moment as the new conflict described in the text (timed with the second color-image of modern landscape).

Lincoln's reference to the immediate context of 1863 is timed to coincide with the updated scenery, isolating the contested place of the new millennium: "We are now engaged in a great Civil War testing whether that nation or any nation so dedicated, can long endure." The past is not the Founding Fathers as it was for Lincoln, but Lincoln himself; the present is not 1863, but 2010. In the new contest—fused with image and speech—the "struggle" or "battle" is not the Civil War (or not *just* the Civil War), or the meaning of the United States, but the meaning of Gettysburg as an unadulterated vestige of memory.



**FIGURE 6** No Casino Gettysburg Film Sills, Part One. These images are taken from the “No Casino Gettysburg” production of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, 2010. Connecting different “fields” of battle, the video matches separate contests across time and space: *“Fourscore and seven years ago, our forefathers brought forth to this great continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. We are now engaged in a great Civil War, testing whether that nation or any nation so dedicated, can long endure.”*<sup>11</sup>

The implicit conclusion that Lincoln’s speech prophetically answers the call of protesters in 2010 continues as the reading progresses. The film trades grotesque images of dead Union soldiers with gravestones, monuments, and close-up images of the

<sup>11</sup> The “No Casino Gettysburg” films were produced with the generous volunteer contributions of actors, filmmakers, and composers. See, *No Casino Gettysburg*, “The Gettysburg Address.” Accessed from [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMMzY1KJVe0>] on 1 March 2011. Images used with permission of the producers.

Gettysburg Address etched in stone. Readers implore listeners of their responsibilities to the past. Indeed, a later portion of the text—emphasized with repetition of the phrase that listeners can “never forget” the virtues of the dead—is designed with visual reverence to the monuments of Gettysburg. Lincoln’s original call for renewed dedication to the cause “so nobly advanced” and taken up by the living creates a new context for imagining the updated struggle for authenticity. This portion of the film intersects images of readers parsing the text interchanged with monuments—literal dedications—and visitors milling about the park; an image of respectful dedication in the literal sense of observance, not meddling [See Figure 7].

The sense of devotion and “dedication”—a phrase with a roving meaning in Lincoln’s usage—is visually conveyed with images of monuments paying respect for the dead. In step-with Ken Burns’ reading of “us” being “here dedicated,” moreover, are the images of tourists milling through a bridge entering the site. Lincoln’s term “dedicate” is expanded once more to be respectful attention to the past, an eschewing of any risk that may result in losing the site’s authentic meaning. This production doesn’t mention the casino project by name, and only once draws viewers to the organization’s website with the added text, “Save Gettysburg” to conclude the film. The notion of development has, however, been likened to a formidable foe threatening the soul of American history. This overproduction of the text presents Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address as both an old and a new appeal to dedication—verbal and visual metonymy of preserved history in the form of traditional monuments.



**FIGURE 7** No Casino Gettysburg Film Stills, Part Two. *“It is for us the living rather, to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they fought here and thus far so nobly advanced. It is, rather, for us to be here dedicated, to the great task remaining before us.”* Images used with kind permission.

*No Casino Gettysburg* attempts to unlock a deeper (but thinner) meaning of the text by turning the endgame of the message from a renewal of freedom to an idyllic concept of maintaining history, anchored in remembrance of the dead and respectful reverence. This recital, in other words, is appealing to draw two paths from Lincoln’s words by their association with the timed images. In one path, Lincoln’s speech remains a touching monument to the ideals of equality and freedom forged in a time of crisis. In another path, the reverence for the dead is reframed as reverence for the speech itself, for Lincoln himself, and for the honored dead. Placed in the context of the controversy, remembering the Gettysburg Address means protecting—“to be here dedicated”—the space and the speech from outside incursion, and assuming the status quo of respectful tourism. The audience’s task, in this upending of time, is not to continue the task of

renewing the country's virtue of democratic principles, or even to remember the Gettysburg Address as an encomium, but to preserve sacred soil by remaining vigilant of encroachments on history. Maintaining the public scenery has surpassed the previous invitation to maintain a public idea.

Confusion arises, finally, as to the significance of this production's readers. Consistent with the preservation of history imagined in monumental form, the selective elements of each reader's biography contribute to the popular *image* of American history. With the exception of Paul Bucha, a Medal of Honor Recipient, each reader has popularized or represented American history in popular form. Actors Stephen Lang, Sam Waterston, and Matthew Broderick have each played either Lincoln, or other well-known figures of the American Civil War; Ken Burns, lastly, is the producer of a popular documentary, *The Civil War*, which represents, in the words of Eric Foner, "the most successful presentation of history for a broad popular audience during the 1990s."<sup>12</sup> McCullough's presence is puzzling, except when positioned as a well-known author of American history, though not particularly in antebellum era writing. To rationalize each voice as Lincoln, listeners and viewers need to appropriate an image of war and history—whether that image is one of participation in past wars, producer of popular media. Stephen Lang should not be his villainous character from the 2009 film *Avatar*; Broderick should not be the namesake from *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*; Waterston should not be a tough lawyer from *Law & Order*. To save the memory of Gettysburg, the *No Casino Gettysburg* campaign employed voices that collectively spoke to an image of

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<sup>12</sup> Eric Foner, *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 189.



history and war informed largely by premises of popular culture, a hotchpot reading that reinforces the distance between respectful memories of the past from the adulterating stain of capitalist ventures on civil religious soil.

*No Casino Gettysburg*'s example is recounted at length as a way of introducing the new world of repetition in twenty-first century practice. This artifact upends our conceptions of how place, time, and persona are conceived in the traditional act of reading. Though not ceremonial in the traditional sense of being organized around a national holiday or communal remembrance, the above treatment of Lincoln's speech offers a preview for the style and form by which contemporary publics and communities have remembered and repeated their revered texts. In this chapter I argue that contemporary practices of ceremonial repetition have embraced a network sensibility both within media channels and without. This heightened emphasis on splintering the text results in a greater emphasis on implied relationships between words, images, and bodies than has been discussed in preceding chapters. The remarkable characteristic of contemporary episodes of ceremonial repetition is the dichotomous gulf between an overabundance of associative relations forged in a digital environment, and the seemingly austere modes of speaking through multiple voices in traditional public settings. The adoption of a style, I argue in later examples, has resulted in greater opportunity to convey and reconstitute the meaning of a text while also adding greater weight to how the purpose of remembrance is conveyed.

In addition to exploring the network style in ceremonial repetition, this chapter emphasizes the rhetorical possibilities and limitations regarding materiality and

ceremonial repetition. As Carole Blair has suggested, texts must be inhabited in some substantive form to be recognized. “Rhetoric is not rhetoric until it is uttered, written, or otherwise manifested or given presence,” Blair has argued.<sup>13</sup> Material adaptations in space and time become a major source of harnessing or altering the impact of such rhetoric. For the examples included in the remainder of this chapter, materiality refers to texts operating within both media environments as well as physical environments of place. “Reproduction is an intervention in the materiality of the text,” Blair continues, “and it is important to grapple with the degrees and kinds of change wrought by it.”<sup>14</sup> The material fusion of image and text, place and text, and body and text invite certain presumptions of public memory intended from an act of reading. To facilitate this exploration of material and rhetorical intersection, I first review the relevant features of Aristotle’s enthymeme as a useful framework to analyze the mixture of cues bound up in a networked text. Second, I elaborate on the precise features of a network sensibility, how it is attributed to new media environments, and how such practices are translated in public performances beyond the scope of video production. Finally, I analyze three relevant case studies that exemplify the contemporary turn toward networking the text as ceremonial repetition.

The examples analyzed in this chapter can be grouped in two distinctive contexts, each with a distinctive material form. In one environment, the digital splintering and matching of words to images, people, and places occur in a media environment. The *No*

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<sup>13</sup> Carole Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality,” in *Rhetorical Bodies*, edited by Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 18.

<sup>14</sup> Carole Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality,” 38.

*Casino Gettysburg* example above and the *FOX Sports*' reading of the Declaration of Independence described later illustrate this subset. In another environment, text, image, persona, and place again merge through multiple voices, though here in a physical—not media—place, exemplified in two distinctive readings: The recital of the U.S. Constitution in the House of Representatives, and the reading of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech by Watkins Elementary School students in Washington, D.C. Each example illustrates the blessing and bane of reimagining a text in the age of the network.

More than other examples introduced in this study, moreover, the act of networking the text brings to the fore a fundamental question introduced in Walter Benjamin's important essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Contrary to the claim that repetition extends and illuminates the life of a text outlined in chapter two, Benjamin stressed the tension between art and its replica, noting how the "aura" is lost in reproduction. The "authenticity" is "jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter," Benjamin noted, "[a]nd what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object."<sup>15</sup> John Durham Peters clarifies this point when he compares art to "a mortal being," which "has a unique, irreplaceable body from which it cannot be separated without dying in some way."<sup>16</sup> As I argue in the pages that follow, the network style—regardless of its

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<sup>15</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 221.

<sup>16</sup> John Durham Peters, *Speaking Into the Air: The History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 238.

application inside or outside a media environment—inherits potentials and pitfalls that call into question the quality of a text’s life in the age of seemingly endless repetition.

## ENTHYMEMES LIVING IN MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS

Aristotle’s definition of the enthymeme is vital to determining the suggested memory of ceremonial repetition, particularly when the act of reading combines different forms (verbal and visual) in reimagining the text. The enthymeme is “the ‘body’ of persuasion,” Aristotle wrote, representing a syllogistic conclusion with one or more premises brought into being by the audience.<sup>17</sup> Paradigm reasoning (inductive) is distinctive from enthymematic reasoning (deductive), Aristotle noted, primarily because of a speaker’s selection of premises. When speakers rely on an audience accepting a premise, furthermore, “it does not have to be stated, since the hearer supplies it.”<sup>18</sup> In Book Two of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle noted that a conclusion derived from premises can be presumed by the audience as either “*demonstrative*” of agreed fact or “*refutative*” of agreed difference.<sup>19</sup> Elaborating these sketches of the enthymeme’s importance and functions, Lloyd Bitzer draws further clarification. To suggest an enthymeme is an “incomplete syllogism” is not entirely clear, Bitzer suggests. By contrast, such a description should imply that

the speaker does not *lay down* his premises but lets his audience supply them out of its stock knowledge of opinion and knowledge. This does not mean that premises are never verbalized, although to verbalize them often amounts to redundancy and poor rhetorical taste. Whether or not premises are verbalized is of no logical importance. What is of great rhetorical importance, however, is that the premises of enthymemes be supplied by the audience.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, translated by George Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 30.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 42.

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 187-189.

<sup>20</sup> Lloyd Bitzer, “Aristotle’s Enthymeme Revisited” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 45 (1959): 407.

Comprehending the enthymeme is like interpreting a non-existent question-and-answer session, Bitzer claimed: enthymemes occur “only when speaker and audience jointly produce them.”<sup>21</sup> If critics analyzing a text for its enthymematic qualities must account for agreed-upon premises, what may comprise a premise? Thomas Conley posits that a speaker’s use of examples, probabilities, and general signs could hypothetically constitute a premise in such reasoning and analysis.<sup>22</sup>

The extensional constitutive life of a text performed in repetition benefits from an enthymematic reading. As J. Anthony Blair has argued, visual messages can be argumentative, and by implication of Conley’s reference to signs as premises, a key part of an enthymematic design. Blair specifically has noted that visual messages must engage a reader’s “choice buttons” in terms of belief, attitude, or action in order to be deemed argumentative: “Once the choice light flashes,” in Blair’s words, “persuasion is occurring.”<sup>23</sup> Cara Finnegan further supports the designation of visual images as key premises. In her analysis of contested photographs depicting evidence of drought conditions in the 1930s, she describes the “*naturalistic enthymeme*,” or the process by which “the viewer of the photograph ‘fills in the blank’ with the assumption that the image is ‘real,’” or an unadulterated representation of the world.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Bitzer, “Aristotle’s Enthymeme Revisited,” 408; Also see Walter Fisher, “Uses of the Enthymeme,” *Speech Teacher* 13 (1964): 197-203.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Conley, “The Enthymeme in Perspective” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984): 169. The thesis that signs can be used as premises is echoed in Valerie J. Smith, “Aristotle’s Classical Enthymeme and the Visual Argumentation of the Twenty-First Century” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 43 (Winter-Spring 2007): 117.

<sup>23</sup> J. Anthony Blair, “The Possibility and Actuality of Visual Arguments” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 33 (Summer 1996): 36.

<sup>24</sup> Cara Finnegan, “The Naturalistic Enthymeme and Visual Argument: Photographic Representation in the ‘Skull Controversy,’” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 37 (Winter 2001), 143; Also see Finnegan’s discussion of “image vernaculars,” or the “enthymematic modes of reasoning employed by audiences in

An enthymematic approach to ceremonial repetition, though implied in previous chapters, is essential to critically evaluate the range of symbolic associations built into readings profiled in this chapter. By scrutinizing moments of repetition for the unstated premise invited from a producer or speaker to an “ideal reader,” critics can account for the predominant memory by which past words are reimagined in public display.<sup>25</sup> Our present historical moment, by contrast, finds texts conveyed through multiple voices and splintered with a dizzying array of suggestive visual and verbal cues, complicating the critical task. As the content and form of a message interact, so too the nature of such interaction—and the enthymematic relations implied therein—are shaped and defined by the channel or media by which a message is communicated.

Communication theorists have long been fascinated by the influence of media. As Raymond Williams summarized, “media” was presumed to be “an intervening or intermediate agency or substance” up through the 17<sup>th</sup> century, only later to be defined as a short-hand reference to “broadcast service.”<sup>26</sup> The importance of media in communication studies was argued most forcefully by Marshall McLuhan, who

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the context of specific practices of reading and viewing in visual cultures,” elaborated in her work, “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Cultures” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8 (2005): 31-58.

<sup>25</sup> The “ideal reader” is a key dimension to constitutive theories of rhetoric described in chapter two, and elaborated in detail by James Boyd White. For clarity, White noted that the ideal reader is “a character in the world created by the text. For in acting on the reader as he does, the writer calls on him to function out of what he knows and is—for one who brings nothing to a text cannot be a reader of it—and to realize some of his possibilities for perception and response, for making judgments and taking positions. To engage with a text is to become different from what one was. There is a sense in which every text may be said to define an ideal reader, which it asks its audience to become, or to approximate, for the moment at least, and forever perhaps.” See White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 15.

<sup>26</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, Revised Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 203.

famously posited both that “the medium is the message,” and mediums are also an “extension of ourselves” shaping the “scale and form of human association and action.”<sup>27</sup> Mark B. N. Hansen has offered additional insight to McLuhan’s thesis. For Hansen media are not merely channels for *producing* messages, but the means of also *interpreting* messages. “Even though there is and can be no such thing as a medium without content,” he notes, “to reduce the social impact of a medium to the content it conveys is to overlook the profound changes that ensue from revolutions in cultural techniques of information processing and consumption.”<sup>28</sup> When we observe a message being transferred into a new medium, we are witnesses to an upending of how the message is (re)produced and observed. For W. J. T. Mitchell, this means that media act as more of a “support system” than mere “support” in conveying a text: “Like organisms, they [texts] can move from one media environment to another, so that a verbal image can be reborn in a painting or a photograph, and a sculpted image can be rendered in cinema or virtual reality.”<sup>29</sup> To translate this observation to our own concerns, texts not only live second lives, but also live in distinctive rhetorical environments, sometimes transplanted from oral speech to video production; from written text to oral performance; from a singular expression to a network of voices. Each choice alters the shape and potential of speech remade for the imagination.

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<sup>27</sup> Marshall McLuhan, “Understanding Media,” in *Essential McLuhan*, edited by Eric McLuhan and Frank Zingrone (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 151-152.

<sup>28</sup> Mark B. N. Hansen, “New Media,” in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, eds. W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 175.

<sup>29</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 203 and 216.

As numerous critics agree, the transition of message content to television and online environments has been unmistakable. Kathleen Hall Jamieson highlighted the altered form of public discourse with the new environments of radio and television. “Electricity,” Jamieson noted, “transported communication into an intimate environment,” shifting a speaker’s focus from the stump environment to the home environment, while also prompting the rise of autobiographical and narrative styles to replace the fiery confrontation traditional to political oratory.<sup>30</sup> Electricity alone did not alter the form of communication in the media age, however. The key word defining the new media environments of the twenty-first century is “network,” a term Alexander R. Galloway defines as the fusion of “the Old Saxon words *net*, an open-weave fabric used for catching or confining animals or objects, and *werk*, both an act of doing and the structure or thing resulting from the act.”<sup>31</sup> The network is the energy and backdrop for ceremonial repetition, beckoning listeners to understand and remember texts “as systems of connectivity.”<sup>32</sup> The network atmosphere of cyberspace technologies represent “new realms of space—or a third nature—generated by digital computation and communication flows of numerical data encrypted to represented video images, spoken language, musical performances, textual script, graphic displays or hardware instructions.”<sup>33</sup> Life, messages, and space itself, in other words, exists online. Jorge

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<sup>30</sup> Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 55.

<sup>31</sup> Alexander R. Galloway, “Networks,” in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, eds. W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 283.

<sup>32</sup> Galloway, “Networks,” 283.



Reina Schement and Terry Curtis elaborate on the nature of cyberspace as a network of communal attachments, variant from other media, when they suggest

[i]ndividuals who live fragmented lives continue to experience the desire for community and for dialogue. As social, family, and political attachments weaken, individuals recreate interconnectedness through the use of communication technologies. Increasingly, Americans live in communities structured by communication networks. These communities exist as connections without the geographic boundaries of village or town. In a highly mobile population friends and even the nuclear family stay 'together' through frequent telephone calls, shared audio and videocassettes, and a few letters. Their actual physical contact sometimes only occurs between long intervals of separation. These communities constitute both a response to fragmentation and a reification of fragmentation. In effect, they are virtual communities.<sup>34</sup>

This description of contemporary public messages further supports the notion that texts also live within the emerging network of human communication. Like the family and friend connection noted by Schement and Curtis, the text repeated can live outside physical space and yet still invite and connect a range of viewers and listeners around its suggested meaning.

Manuel Castells argues that the impact of network associations has influenced nearly every facet of contemporary life. In his influential work *The Rise of the Network Society*, Castells presents a sprawling overview on the social, political, and cultural implications of a world wherein the flow of information undergoes radical alteration: messages once thought to be whole and sent in a linear direction are now splintered into shortcuts that defy presumptions of time, space, and subjectivity. In Castells' words, "societies are organized around human processes structured by historically determined relationship of *production*, *experience*, and *power*," and the information age is nothing

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<sup>33</sup> Timothy W. Luke, "Simulated Sovereignty, Telematic Territoriality: The Political Economy of Cyberspace," *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, edited by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 148.

<sup>34</sup> Jorge Reina Schement and Terry Curtis, *Tendencies and Tensions of the Information Age: The Production and Distribution of Information in the United States* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 148.

less than “*the emergence of a new social structure.*”<sup>35</sup> What characteristics might we locate in this new media environment (arguably a new media world)? Foremost among the changes relative to ceremonial repetition are perceptions of time and space. We no longer perceive information in spaces, but instead experience messages through “a process,” Castells calls the “space of flows,” an uncertain terrain set up around electronic connections that “links up specific places, with well-defined social, cultural, and functional characteristics.”<sup>36</sup> Rather than gather around the Old House of Representatives, or any number of city halls or churches, our meeting place in the networking of a message is beyond our physical experience. I need not be or even know about Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to become a witness to Lincoln’s text renewed. We live in places. We experience information, however, in an abstract sense: “meaning is increasing separated from knowledge,” ushering “a structural schizophrenia between two spatial logics that threatens to break down communication channels in society.”<sup>37</sup>

While traditional conceptions of time may have been organized around the certainty of death, a network sense of information has effectively postponed death indefinitely, meaning we are “in the midst of mixing tenses to create a forever universe, not a self-expanding but self-maintaining, not cyclical but random, not recursive but incursive: timeless time, using technology to escape the contexts of its existence, and to appropriate selectively any value each context could offer in the ever-present.”<sup>38</sup> Pushed to a greater degree, the information network sensibility is a *compression* of our temporal

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<sup>35</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Chichester, West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 14 and 26, *emphasis* in original.

<sup>36</sup> Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 443.

<sup>37</sup> Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 458.

<sup>38</sup> Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 464.

senses, and therefore an elimination of time as planned or experienced sequentially. Indeed, I need not encounter *No Casino Gettysburg*'s artifact prior to the Pennsylvania Gaming Board's decision to cancel the proposed plan. The repetition is, in short, flying through cyberspace. As a viewer, I encounter the message beyond any traditional sense of space, and outside the prescribed limits of time. To repeat the Farewell Address in perpetuity in the U.S. Senate, furthermore, is to mark the yearly rotation of time until the third week of February. When repetition moves into the media environment, however, the associational relationship between text and time, or text and place, is upset—occurring in this time and every time in the viewer's experience, and, even more, beyond the space of communal reflection in the “space of flows.”

When I suggest that a moment of ceremonial repetition is enacting a text with a network sensibility, I am primarily proposing two important observations. First, the text inhabits a media environment that enables its presence to be altered or affected by that medium's arrangement of time, space, and subjectivity of an audience. Second, this text also takes on the norms of a network of connections. This means a transition has occurred from a singular, mono-voiced performance of a text to a multi-faceted, poly-vocal presence of a text repeated. Some repetitions carry both components of the network sensibility. Repetitions by the U.S. House of Representatives and the Watkins Elementary students incorporate the second—not the first—component of this style. Without focusing on ceremonial repetition per se, David Birdsell and Leo Groarke note how this networking effect might *look* in the realm of visual communication:

Shot length has been reduced in almost all commercial television, and the number of shots per minute has surged. Much as cubism tried to present multiple perspectives unfolding over time and/or space on a single, two dimensional frame, the quick-cut video editing style of the 1990's prefers several quick perspectives on a subject over the single, probing, shot that holds an image for minutes at a time. The result is a combination of visuals that decenters a unitary perspectivism. No one camera is all-knowing and the subject is deliberately distorted with the use of negative effects or other filters that 'reveal' different elements of the subject-as-source of videographic play.<sup>39</sup>

These observations illustrate the intricate complexity of both the *No Casino Gettysburg* production and the later ceremonial recitations outlined in the following pages. In contemporary ceremonial repetition, no one voice is the single authority or channel of the text. Listeners experience the words of another as not only re-imagined with a voluminous display of images, but through a myriad echo of voices. The text, in short, is fragmented, splintered, and branched through voices that redirect the flow of a speech on pivots occurring at the sentence or word level, yet each connects to one another while to, taken together, give the semblance of completed discourse. In the following analysis, I elaborate on the implied enthymematic possibilities enacted when the life of reading is either experienced in or transferred from the digital world and the physical world alike. By critically evaluating the relationships between sight and sound, we may posit not only the implied memory of a public address inherent in its performance, but also better understand the limits and potentials of ceremonial repetition in a new age.

*Flirting With Simulacrum: The Declaration Of Independence, 2002-2011*

In his justification for analyzing the Declaration of Independence as a rhetorical document, Stephen Lucas noted that the "apotheosis of the Declaration as a sacred creed is so deeply embedded in our national consciousness that we typically see its original

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<sup>39</sup> David Birdsell and Leo Groarke, "Toward a Theory of Visual Argument" *Argumentation and Advocacy* 33 (Summer 1996): 7.

purpose in universal terms almost totally divorced from the events of 1776.”<sup>40</sup> As several studies have noted, the original document was a public appeal to formally break ties between American colonies and Great Britain. For James Boyd White, the text presents its reader with a new constitutive framework, “meant to work a change of feeling in the reader: to move him from his ordinary state of consciousness, in which his ordinary sense of value and civilization operate, into a willingness to pledge his all in a battle to save the country it has defined as his.”<sup>41</sup> Crafted with a clear purpose and remembered well beyond its original scope, the Declaration of Independence has garnered a unique reputation through repetition, none more compelling for analysis than the recent trend initiated by *FOX Sports* of melding the text with the American Super Bowl.

The Declaration does not easily lend itself to the repetitive act. As Pauline Maier notes, however, recitations were the most common way the text was “made known” following its publication. Some readings were than informative. Indeed, recitations were performed by the Continental Army, directed by George Washington, and deliberately displayed within sight of British troops.<sup>42</sup> Formal ceremonial performances of the text ebbed in the first two decades after it was published, but took on added significance within the partisan rancor of the 1790s. Federalists considered the Fourth of July a “rite of passage” that was “consummated”; Republicans, by contrast, framed the

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<sup>40</sup> Stephen E. Lucas, “Justifying America: The Declaration of Independence as a Rhetorical Document,” ed, Thomas W. Benson, *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 68.

<sup>41</sup> James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 239.

<sup>42</sup> Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: How America Declared Its Independence From Britain* (London: Pilmco, 1999), 156.

holiday as evidence of “promises not yet fulfilled,” and still “unfolding.”<sup>43</sup> It is little wonder, then, that partisan interests molded separate celebrations; Federalists largely ignored recitations of the Declaration while Republicans relished the yearly reminder of Jefferson’s centrality to the American political experience, and, hopefully, a new political era.<sup>44</sup> It was not until the War of 1812 and dissipating factionalism between the two major political rivals when the reading of the Declaration of Independence was reconstituted with “new meaning and vigor” for the generation removed from the Revolutionary War.<sup>45</sup> Though it remains unclear how nineteenth-century commemorations remembered the text’s relation to its historical origin, efforts to visualize the founding document of the United States has been an equally challenging and robust effort.

Jefferson’s text outlived both the author and the original purpose, taking on a new role as a “sacred document” essential for anyone seeking “the moral high ground in public debate.”<sup>46</sup> In addition to being central to the antislavery arguments of the 1850s and 1860s, the Declaration was often transplanted from its customary celebration date of July 4<sup>th</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup>, marking Freedom Day celebrations with the implied promise of actualizing the text’s original idea. Preceding a collective focus on the Emancipation Proclamation, it was common to hear the Declaration of Independence read aloud,

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<sup>43</sup> Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 161 and 195.

<sup>44</sup> Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*, 184.

<sup>45</sup> Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*, 206-207; John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 23.

<sup>46</sup> Pauline Maeir, *American Scripture*, 197.

sometimes in conjunction with state laws granting slaves emancipation.<sup>47</sup> Ties between founding promises and antebellum politics also took on visual expressions. In an 1861 lithograph titled “The American Declaration of Independence Illustrated,” artist Dominique Fabronious depicts a striking juxtaposition of text and American race relations. At the center of the image, Fabronious presents two men—one black and one white—in a basket raised by an American eagle. The freed slave casts off his chains and his white counterpart proclaims, “Break every Yoke; let the oppressed go free.” With clear inspiration from Jefferson’s text, the two Stars and Stripes flags bear the mottoes, “All Men are Created Equal,” and “Stand by the Declaration.”<sup>48</sup> Absent the act of repetition, the lithograph brings the founding document before the eyes, prompting viewers to expand the meaning of the text for the political moment.

Visualizing the Declaration of Independence through performance is no easy task, however. As previous scholars have noted, the text is most potently rich when read as an elaborate justification for Revolution (military or political), yet remains undeniably powerful as a source of moral contemplation beyond original intent. Following the traumatizing events of 11 September 2001, the Declaration of Independence experienced newfound relevancy in public display. Bradford Vivian’s analysis of the one-year commemoration of 9/11, which featured a recital of the Declaration’s introduction and preamble, highlighted the manner by which sacrosanct texts were positioned as “neoliberal epideictic,” or an “apolitical vocabulary of democratic excellence,” absent

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<sup>47</sup> J. R. Kerr-Ritchie, *Rites of August First: Emancipation Day in the Black Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 112.

<sup>48</sup> “The American Declaration of Independence Illustrated,” published by Thayer and Co. (Boston), 1861. *The Library of Congress*, accessed from [<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004665361/>] on 1 May 2012.

historical context or the cultivation of civic virtue.<sup>49</sup> Neoliberal epideictic, Vivian concluded, “reduces the rhetorical rituals of public memory to discursive forms deprived of deliberative consequence, to mere symbols of tradition.”<sup>50</sup> Though tempting as a ceremonial fixture to nothing in particular, the Declaration has also proven itself malleable to the network environment prior to the one-year commemoration of 9/11.<sup>51</sup>

Like the fusion of text and image displayed in the *No Casino Gettysburg* production, the *FOX Sports* production of the Declaration attempts to unfold an alternate interpretation through the splicing and layering of the text with associated images and personas. In this case, the featured readers of the text are past and present players and managers in the National Football League, as well as members of the U.S. Armed Forces. This production—a self-proclaimed “Super Bowl tradition”<sup>52</sup>—has aired on national television on three separate occasions, meeting the largest television audience in the world in 2002, 2008, and 2011, respectively. According to the television studio behind the recitation, the original reading in 2002 was a purposeful response to the

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<sup>49</sup> Bradford Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic: Rhetorical Form and Commemorative Politics on September 11th, 2002,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (February 2006), 4.

<sup>50</sup> Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic,” 14.

<sup>51</sup> Reading the Declaration of Independence through the network sensibility is not wholly new. *National Public Radio* frequently streams an audio performance of the text read by correspondents each 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Moreover, in early 2003, a production simply titled *The Declaration of Independence* was released. Produced by Rob Reiner and co-directed by Frank Capra III, the feature positioned prominent Hollywood actors—Michael Douglas, Kathy Bates, Mel Gibson, Whoopi Goldberg, and Morgan Freeman—reciting the text, each trading single lines or phrase in a fractured performance. A four-minute introduction by Freeman provided a general overview on the historical exigence of the text as well as the contradictions of ideals and practices of freedom in 1776. The justification of the reading, moreover, hinges upon a reification of the line, “I am so proud to be an American.” A copy of the fifteen minute film is available online through [[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYttEu\\_NLU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYttEu_NLU)].

<sup>52</sup> *FOX Sports*, “Super Bowl XLV On FOX Broadcast Guide,” accessed from [[http://static.foxsports.com/content/fscom/binary/2011/01/26/\\_COMPLETE\\_BROADCAST\\_GUIDE1296078077221.pdf](http://static.foxsports.com/content/fscom/binary/2011/01/26/_COMPLETE_BROADCAST_GUIDE1296078077221.pdf)] on 1 March 2012.



attacks of 9/11.<sup>53</sup> Compared to the longer historical tendency of reciting the text as part of a political prayer, or the invocation of a written text into a contested environment, *FOX Sports* has created an image of the text unrecognizable and unjustified to past iterations.

This production embodies all the characteristics of networking the text. Jefferson's text is truncated. Athletes and military personnel read through excerpts, including the introduction and preamble, but excising the text's reference to "The history of the present King of Great Britain," and closing the reading with the promise of remaining dedicated to a sense of "sacred honor." We are left, in other words, with the establishment of an American identity as free and independent, but absent of any justification as to why a world may consider the move just and necessary. Three versions of the performance remain distinctive. The 2002 rendition lays the framework for remembering the text, and features a litany of professional football players and (to a lesser extent) retired politicians to stitch to the reading together.<sup>54</sup> The performance underscores a sense of unique resilience by frequently featuring its readers in front of national monuments or iconic images, such as the Golden Gate Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, or the Saint Louis Arc. Viewers are invited to become witnesses to Jefferson's Declaration anew while images interspersed with the reading profile Jefferson's hand adding letters to the page as they are read aloud. Even more distinctive than scenic backdrops or the suggested relations between the text's origin and modern times is the

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<sup>53</sup> *Satellite Television*, "FOX Sports Broadcast Declaration of Independence for Super Bowl XLV," 28 January 2011. Accessed from [<http://www.satellitetyv-news.com/fox-sports-broadcast-declaration-of-independnece-for-super-bowl-xlv/>] on 15 March 2012.

<sup>54</sup> *FOX Sports*, "Super Bowl XXXVI." (Fox Broadcasting Company, 3 February 2002), Television Broadcast.

preceding and concluding dimensions of the broadcast. Viewers see bodies and hear voices (though often not together) echoing the sentiments of debate defining the original plan to disband from Great Britain. In six-and-a-half minutes of airtime, viewers are introduced to historical actors portraying Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson reciting quotations attributed, but not explicitly credited, to each figure. These expressions need not even remind us of the same thing. John Adams reminds us of the inevitability of independence, while Thomas Jefferson's likeness recounts the principle that the "tree of liberty is refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants," a quote wherein Jefferson was reflecting on revolution, not predicting its inevitability.<sup>55</sup> On screen a quill pen scrawls the Declaration to paper, blending into the volley of lines between professional athletes and politicians, slowly piecing together the gradual construction of the text.

The 2008 reading sharpens the focus of the Declaration considerably. Here the voices and faces of readers expands to include individuals from politics, football, and the military to deliver Jefferson's words. As communication scholar Michael Butterworth has noted, the 2008 production was "sport culture's rhetorical endorsement of the 'war on terror.'"<sup>56</sup> The arrangement of text, image, and reader, Butterworth claimed, limits the notions of democratic citizenship around the sacred words of the Declaration. This version repeats the use of historical actors and dialogue, reconnecting the concerns of the present to the decision of revolution. Butterworth's reading of this production is

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<sup>55</sup> Thomas Jefferson, "The New Constitution: To William S. Smith, Paris, Nov. 13, 1787," in *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 911.

<sup>56</sup> Michael Butterworth, "FOX Sports, Super Bowl XLII, and the Affirmation of American Civil Religion" *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 32 (August 2008): 318.

convincing: In this reading, the Declaration connotes sacrifice. Readers, including Petyon Manning, former Senator Jack Kemp, and NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue, recite individual lines from recognizable backdrops of the Jefferson Memorial, Navy Aircraft carriers, as well as Ground Zero in New York City. The relationship between American defense and the Declaration is presented as a natural comingling, even if mention of *why* the colonies should revolt is relegated to silence. Specifically, Butterworth has noted, the memory of Pat Tillman plays a significant role in re-casting the Declaration as a memory of national sacrifice. Tillman's death in Afghanistan in 2004 was especially noteworthy since he left his multi-million dollar contract to serve in the Army Rangers. Though critical of the war effort, Tillman's example is portrayed as an endorsement of the production's narrative, despite the grudgingly acknowledged fact that his death to "friendly fire" was originally portrayed as heroism in crisis.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, Tillman's widow, Marie Tillman, is prominently featured in *FOX Sports'* 2008 production, reading the abbreviated sentence, "We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes..." standing next to a memorial dedicated to her husband. As Butterworth observed, the story of Tillman served "as a metonym for all the over 4,000 Americans who have died in the 'war on terror,' echoing the common refrain, 'You shall not have died in vain.'"<sup>58</sup>

If the 2008 production of the Declaration limited the inference of the Declaration to supporting military obligation and sacrifice, the 2011 version is nothing less than a

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<sup>57</sup> An overview of Tillman's story and the subsequent cover-up by the Defense Department is covered in Jonathan Krakaur, *Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman* (New York: Anchor Books), 2009.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Butterworth, "FOX Sports," 321.

higgledy-piggledy mess of crisscrossing symbolism. Rather than constrain the meaning of the Declaration to national pride, or an endorsement of military defense, the 2011 reading expands its applicability to nearly any activity conceivable in American public life. Replacing the original role of re-enactors to set the importance of the text, this version features introductory and closing remarks by NFL commissioner Roger Goodall and former Secretary of State Colin Powell. “The Declaration of Independence is a remarkable document that defines our national character,” Powell begins, delivering a preview of the recitation co-written by himself, Goodall, and *FOX Sports* producer Jennifer Pransky.<sup>59</sup> Goodall, for no apparent reason, states that the Declaration began our defense of liberty and path toward a “more perfect union” drawing a path from revolution to the establishment of American government in the U.S. Constitution. This founding document, like the imagined productions since 2002, has evolved. “Slowly the differences between us have changed from reasons to fight to causes to celebrate,” Powell intones. The consistent theme suggested in this performance is harmonious diversity. “Each American citizen breaths life into the Declaration of Independence everyday we live free,” Goodall declares prior to the reading.<sup>60</sup> We can be free any way we so choose; to be free is simply to be.

This diversity of perspectives is portrayed in the visual accompaniment to the text. Well-known athletes and military personnel again read lines from the Declaration while positioned next to a variety of communities representative of some segment of

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<sup>59</sup> *Satellite Television*, “*FOX Sports* Broadcast Declaration of Independence for Super Bowl XLV,” 28 January 2011. Accessed from [<http://www.satellitetelevision.com/fox-sports-broadcast-declaration-of-independence-for-super-bowl-xlv/>] on 15 March 2012; *FOX Sports*, “Super Bowl XLV,” 6 February 2011.

<sup>60</sup> *FOX Sports*, “Super Bowl XLV” (Fox Broadcasting Company, 6 February 2011), Television Broadcast.

American society: the Baltimore Recruiting Battalion, the George Washington Carver High School football team from New Orleans, Mike Farm Enterprises (a small business from Ohio), members of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra, employees from the Green Bay Packaging, Inc., and the El Centro Chicano student group from Stanford University. The array of voices, faces, and perspectives channeled through the text is overwhelming. If the previous incarnations of *FOX Sports'* Declaration were implied resilience of the United States, or endorsements of American foreign policy, the most recent display of the text amounts to countless *possible* conclusions: the Declaration reifies the American military; racial diversity; prosperity for small businesses; the arts; young people; football; the list could go on.

The three versions of Declaration read in a network environment invite interpretations that are subject to multiple overlapping channels and inferences. The most compelling inference, however, is the connection between America's founding and American football. The Declaration becomes a text not only filtered through a multitude of images and voices, but also a text that is to be read and understood within the context of a national sport. The resounding inference implied between bodies seen and voices heard is the comparison is between the revolutionaries who forged independence then and the athletes and politicians of today. Jefferson, Adams, Hancock, and Paine united a disparate citizenry then; a sport does the same today.

Does one contest (the Revolution) help us understand another (the Super Bowl)? For clarity, consider a segment from the original 2002 broadcast shown prior to the reading of the Declaration. In lead-up to the game, a series of players were taped

reading *segments*—often a single line—from speeches by John F. Kennedy, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Adlai Stevenson. This collection of fragments stitched together was a way, the announcer intoned, to “look to the past to point us in the present direction.”<sup>61</sup> The shallowness of this brief exercise makes the recitation of the Declaration of Independence look like a careful study by comparison. Kennedy’s memorialization of Robert Frost, wherein he describes a nation’s habit of remembrance as an indicator of its character, is seemingly stitched without context or explanation to inspiring fragments from Theodore Roosevelt’s “Strenuous Life” speech of 1899, lines of FDR’s First Inaugural, Adlai Stevenson’s 1952 speech to the American Legion, and connected back again to Kennedy’s inaugural line promoting a sense of individual participation in national affairs.<sup>62</sup> These text fragments—read through the performance of football players—convey a reassuring sense of rejuvenation by draining the memory of each address to the rhetorical depth of a Hallmark card. Commentary following the reading clarifies the motivation even further. The Super Bowl, viewers are told, is not only about celebrating football, but “freedom as well; the freedom to honor men whose

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<sup>61</sup> *FOX Sports*, “Super Bowl XXXVI,” (Fox Broadcasting Company, 3 February 2002), Television Broadcast.

<sup>62</sup> The textual fragments from this broadcast proceed in the following manner: John F. Kennedy, “Remarks at Amherst College, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1963,” retrieved from [<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/JFK-Speeches/Remarks-at-Amherst-College-October-26-1963.aspx>] on 1 September 2012; Theodore Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life,” in *American Speeches: Political Oratory From Abraham Lincoln to Bill Clinton*, ed. Ted Widmer (New York: The Library of America, 2006), 150-161; Franklin Delano Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address,” in *American Speeches*, 398-402; Adlai Stevenson, “Speech to the American Legion,” in *Live From the Campaign Trail: The Greatest Campaign Speeches of the Twentieth Century and How They Shaped Modern America*, Michael Cohen (New York: Walker & Company, 2008), 189-207; John F. Kennedy, “Inaugural Address,” in *American Speeches*, 535-539. Perhaps the 2002 reading could have benefited from a different segment from Theodore Roosevelt’s speech: “A life of slothful ease, a life of that peace which springs merely from lack either of desire or of power to strive after great things, is as little worthy of a nation as of an individual.” Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life,” 150.

contributions may be on the playing field, but whose happiness lies in the thrill of effort and the joy of achievement.”<sup>63</sup> The *FOX Sports*’ production of the Declaration of Independence invites a reconstitution of freedom to include spectatorship itself. When, in an uncertain event, the rites of citizenship required mending, the Declaration of Independence was folded into a memory of such thinness that it could include nearly any way of being,

If “[f]reedom is common sense,” as Goodall suggests at the conclusion of the 2011 production, any and every definition of civic engagement—including a couch-bound holiday of commercial spectacle—is folded into the ideal of the text, and the virtue expected of the audience. The *FOX Sports* production of the Declaration never articulates why a reading of the text necessary, or how some years warrant a reading and others do not. Neither does the production offer clues to what the performance tells us about what is expected of ourselves beyond the confidence that comes from continual support—of America’s iconic status, of the military campaigns around the world, and of any and all ways of being. In three iterations, the Declaration is displayed and enacted as the ultimate condensation symbol: increasingly expected to be anything and everything, and, in the event of close interrogation or uncertainty, nothing.<sup>64</sup>

The *FOX Sports* production of the Declaration is abysmal on several fronts. It is also incredibly important. Few productions dramatically highlight the cyclical function

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<sup>63</sup> *FOX Sports*, “Super Bowl XXXVI.” (Fox Broadcasting Company, 3 February 2002), Television Broadcast.

<sup>64</sup> Murray Edelman defines condensation symbols as those referents that “condense into one symbolic event, sign, or act patriotic pride, anxieties, remembrances of past glories or humiliations, promises of future greatness: some one of these or all of them.” *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 6.

and existence of repetition. Media technologies have not only enabled a new form of ceremonial repetition in voice and image, but have in more dramatic fashion created a new environment where the possibility of art's death is impossible. Instead of accounting for the oral performance of a text alongside a verbal or visual counterpart, the conflation of text, performance, and image have collapsed into hybrid textuality that allows for repetition on an infinite loop in remote corners of cyberspace. More consequential to the function of reading, however, is *FOX Sports'* flirtation with simulacrum, or what Jean Baudrillard warned as a "reversal of origin and end," meaning our frames of reference between object and replica are "no longer mechanically reproduced, but *conceived according to their very reproducibility*, their diffraction from a generative core called a 'model.'"<sup>65</sup> We need not take on Baudrillard's thesis that simulacra rule our message habits wholesale to acknowledge that some forms of ceremonial repetition take on the style and sensibility of the simulacra by design. A text that is produced with no apparent reference to the occasion, an increasingly universalized scope of implied virtues, and relegated to life of endless cycling in the vast corners of a media environment is a text designed—or in this case, appropriated—primarily for its repeatability, not its useful presence to remind a community of something within itself.

*Community Without History: The Constitution in the U.S. House, 2011*

The next two examples in this chapter illustrate the dynamics of ceremonial repetition and the network style outside media environments. The 2011 Congressional

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<sup>65</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, in *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, ed. Lawrence Cahoone (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 426.



reading of the U.S. Constitution and the ongoing ritual of reading Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech both exercise a multi-vocal delivery of the text within a scene of significant space. To repeat a speech is to suggest a line between past and present, and to occupy its discursive space as memory. To occupy space is also an interruption in time. "If time is conceived as a flow or movement then place is pause," Yi-Fu Tuan has noted, further arguing, "While it takes time to form an attachment to place, the quality and intensity of experience matters more than simple duration."<sup>66</sup> Places are ideal vehicles for cultivating a public memory of discourse. As Pierre Nora's influential distinction between *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory) and *millieux de memoire* (real environments of memory) illustrates, "[m]emory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects"; to exist and persist, memory "relies on the materialist of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image."<sup>67</sup> Though space is implied as a visual cue in the *No Casino Gettysburg* and *FOX Sports* productions, the following two examples provide important conclusions on the limits of the network style, its suggested community of readers, and its relative importance to the surrounding space in which a text is invited to both inherit and inhabit shared remembrance.

Next to the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution is the most revered and contested document in United States political culture. Unlike the Declaration, however, the Constitution does not possess a heritage of performance. In

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<sup>66</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 198.

<sup>67</sup> Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations* 26 (1989), 9 and 13.

his sweeping study of public interpretations of the text, Michael Kammen notes that Americans “have known the Constitution best when they have revered it least,” elaborating that “idolatry has too often served as a convenient cover for ignorance.”<sup>68</sup> Further hindering the text’s role as potential *commemorabilia*, the Constitution defies associations with one particular point in time, as evidenced by attempts to commemorate the text’s centennial met multiple interpretations on precisely *when* the text came into fruition.<sup>69</sup> Given the text’s function as an original set of national laws, it is perhaps fitting that such a document elides easy association. As James Boyd White posits, the text invites a collective, evolutionary world to the reader. First, the Constitution introduces multiple voices to the fore, presenting the voice of ordinary citizens—“The People”—as both author and audience of their own order.<sup>70</sup> As the text progress, it shifts authority to different branches of government. Yet, even as modes of power are brought into being, White claims, the text is silent on the exact exercise of power that resides therein. Like a trust, the Constitution invites readers into a world where it fosters a *continuation* of a culture. Or, in White’s assessment, “it at once performs a separation of powers and establishes a trust, places confidence in others to do what should be done.”<sup>71</sup> The ingenuity of the Constitution resides in what it begins, not in what it permanently means: the text is “a new conversation on a permanent basis,” and “by its very nature

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<sup>68</sup> Michael Kammen, *A Machine That Would Go of Itself: The Constitution in American Culture* (New York: Knoph, 1987), 24.

<sup>69</sup> As Kammen notes, plans for the centennial were particularly uncertain, given the “plethora of dates from which to choose,” as well as the lingering sores of the Civil War that suggested “something less than enthusiasm for a nationalistic celebration of the perdurable Union.” See Kammen, *A Machine That Would Go of Itself*, 127 and 133.

<sup>70</sup> James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 240.

<sup>71</sup> James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 244.

lifeless and inert unless it is put to work in the world by the citizens who live under it.”<sup>72</sup>

By design, the Constitution is a text designed as a start, not a conclusion. How, and under what circumstances, does a text with an uncertain point of origin that represents the beginning of a conversation become the object of ceremonial repetition?

Public inclination to recite the Constitution has varied with interest in the text itself. Though Constitution Day (September 17<sup>th</sup>) has been a “pale shadow of its halcyon period following World War I,” it remains one of the rare occasions in which public recitations of the text became part of the ceremonial fabric marking the holiday.<sup>73</sup> In one example, the 142<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Constitution’s adoption, schoolchildren recited key phrases and the preamble of the text to mark the holiday.<sup>74</sup> Given its content and structure, the key site of remembering and interpreting the Constitution is the Supreme Court.<sup>75</sup> At the outset of 2011, however, a controversial display took form calling for a return to the founding text, and enactment as the means of public awareness. Spurred by a perceived crisis of American government resulting from a lack of attention to the Constitution, the commemorative recital of the text in the House of Representatives is yet another example of the new face of ceremonial repetition in the twenty-first century.

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<sup>72</sup> James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 246-247.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Kammen, *A Machine That Would Go of Itself*, 385.

<sup>74</sup> *New York Times*, “Constitution Day Observed in City: Patriotic Societies, Schools and Courts Mark 142<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Adoption,” 18 September 1929, pg 24. Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>75</sup> On the interpretation of the First Amendment, James Boyd White has written, “If the real reason for the constitutional guarantee is to make possible serious and thoughtful deliberation on issues of public concern, for example, the Court itself can show us (or fail to show us) that kind of deliberation in action.” See: White, *Living Speech: Resisting the Empire of Force* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 84.

This moment of rhetorical history occurred on 6 January 2011, the second day of legislative business following the 2010-midterm elections. The day was memorable by design. Not only was the Republican Party resuming majority power in the lower house of Congress, but the ceremonial enlivening of the document also marked the so-called “tea-party-ization of Congress.”<sup>76</sup> The emergence of the “Tea Party” represents one of the most significant developments of contemporary American political culture. Best accounts mark the emergence of the Tea Party in early 2009, representing what David Barstow calls “an amorphous, factionalized uprising with no centralized structure” whose recurring solution to policy objectives in the twenty-first century is “strict adherence to the Constitution.”<sup>77</sup> Adam Liptak went as far as to credit Tea Party influence with making “the Constitution central to the national conversation.”<sup>78</sup> More often than not, however, the dominant interpretation of the text proposed by Tea Party advocates grew from the principle of originalism, or at the very least, the text’s commitment to limited powers. Prior to the 2010 elections, polling indicated a Tea Party energized by a perception of unwarranted power during President Obama’s first term,

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<sup>76</sup> Philip Rucker and Krissah Thompson, “Two New Rules Will Give Constitution a Starring Role in GOP-Controlled House,” *The Washington Post*, 30 December 2010, [<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp/dyn/content/article/2010/12/29/AR2010122901402.html>].

<sup>77</sup> David Barstow, “Tea Party Lights Fuse for Rebellion on Right,” *The New York Times*, 16 February 2010, [[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/16/us/politics/16teaparty.html?\\_r1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/16/us/politics/16teaparty.html?_r1&pagewanted=all)]; Most recognize the name “Tea Party” as both a historical reference to the protest in Boston Harbor in 1773, as well as an acronym for “Taxed Enough Already.” See: T.E.A. = Taxed Enough Already,” *POLITICO*, 8 April 2009, [[http://www.politico.com/blogs/anneschroeder/0409/TEA\\_\\_Taxed\\_Enough\\_Already.html#](http://www.politico.com/blogs/anneschroeder/0409/TEA__Taxed_Enough_Already.html#)]; One organization, *Tea Party Patriots*, has claimed partial responsibility for this loosely affiliated movement. More information is available at [<https://www.teapartypatriots.org/>].

<sup>78</sup> Adam Liptak, “Tea-ing Up the Constitution,” *The New York Times*, 13 March 2010, [<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/weekinreview/14liptak.html?pagewanted=all>].

namely, “the recent health care overhaul, government spending and a feeling that their opinions are not represented in Washington.”<sup>79</sup>

Upon regaining the majority in the House of Representatives, plans were quickly put into place to publicly proclaim dedication to the Constitution as word made flesh in a formal House ceremony. Two points in the rules adopted for the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress ensured a new emphasis on the Constitution. First, a rule was added requiring that a bill or joint resolution may not be introduced unless “the sponsor submits for printing in the *Congressional Record* a statement citing as specifically as practicable the power or powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the bill or joint resolution.”<sup>80</sup> Second, a motion was inserted under “Additional Orders of Business” that “The Speaker may recognize for the reading of the Constitution on the legislative day of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011.”<sup>81</sup> In rule and display, the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress would attempt to embody the text.

Instead of tracing the recital of the text from beginning to end, I offer insight of a different sort regarding this phenomenon of ceremonial repetition. My conclusion is this: the recital of the U.S. Constitution by the House of Representatives in 2011 failed from a rupture between the text as it was remembered and the motivation for the reading. Two supporting claims support my argument. First, the particular edit of the text used in recitation subverted any notion that the multitudes of voices performing the text were

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<sup>79</sup> Kate Zernike and Megan Thee-Brenan, “Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and More Educated,” *The New York Times*, 14 April 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/15/us/politics/15poll.html?pagewanted=all]; Kate Zernike, “Tea Party Disputes Take Toll on Convention,” *The New York Times*, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/26/us/politics/26teaparty.html?pagewanted=all]; As of this writing, the Tea Party Caucus of the House of Representatives has sixty self-identified members. See: *Tea Party Caucus* information is available from [http://teapartycaucus-bachmann.house.gov/].

<sup>80</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, “H. Res. 5,” 5 January 2011. Accessed from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hres5eh/pdf/BILLS-112hres5eh.pdf> on 1 May 2012, page 31.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

part of a political community. Second, the content of the text matched with the austere nature of the reading failed to prompt a compelling enthymematic inference on the text's extensional life. We are in vastly different territory, in other words, from the film and online environments that surrounded *No Casino Gettysburg* and the *FOX Sports'* Declaration. Instead, we are left with only the presence of legislative space and voices of representatives as symbolic associations between the text repeated and the memory to be cultivated. The mismatch of edits and performance, I argue in the pages that follow, hindered any effort toward a meaningful remembrance of the text.

Original planning for the recital drew public interest, even as most commentators suspected the move as pure "political theatre."<sup>82</sup> As the first-of-its-kind occurrence, the Constitution was not only to be read, but also to be performed by members of the House of Representatives themselves. What would have taken about thirty minutes as an oral exercise by one person, in other words, was networked throughout more than ninety minutes of Amendments and Articles read line-by-line, person-by-person. Planning the event fell upon Rep. Robert W. Goodlatte (R-VA), a vocal critic of the Affordable Care Act passed in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. "It stems from the debate we've had for the last two years about things like the exercise of authority in a whole host of different areas by the EPA, we've had this debate in relation to the health care bill, the cap-and-trade legislation," he summarized, continuing, "This Congress has been very aggressive in

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<sup>82</sup> *National Public Radio*, "Congress' Constitution Reading: A New Chance to Debate Document," 6 January 2011, [<http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2011/01/06/132703433/congress-constitution-reading-wont-end-debate-over-document>], accessed on 14 March 2012; for a similar critique, see: *Los Angeles Times*, "House Reads the Constitution, Line by Line," 6 January 2011, [<http://articles.latimes.com/print/2011/jan/06/new/la-pn-constitution-congress-20110106>] on 14 March 2011.

expanding the power of the federal government, and there's been a big backlash for that.”<sup>83</sup> As various newspapers noted, however, the inspiration seemed largely as “recognition of the influence of the Tea Party” on the contemporary Republican Party.<sup>84</sup>

As Jennifer Steinhaur noted in the *New York Times*, the precise edit of the Constitution used in the 2011 ceremony presented lawmakers with a peculiar version of the text: “any portion of the Constitution that was superseded by amendments—including the amendments themselves—would not be read, preventing lawmakers from having to make reference to slaves...or to things like prohibition.”<sup>85</sup> This strange—and arguably unnecessary condition—led to a performance of the text that undermined the potential communal possibilities of the reading. Redacting mention of slavery or its ascribed euphemisms prompted a brief debate prior to the actual reading. Prior to engaging the text, Rep. Jay Inslee (D-WA) rose to address the question of whether the Congress would read “the entire original document without deletion,” a condition unconfirmed prior to the recital, and a detail, as Inslee stated, that would help members

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<sup>83</sup> Goodlatte quoted in Stephen Dinan, *The Washington Times*, “‘We the people’ to Open Next Congress,” 23 December 2010, [<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/dec/23/we-the-people-to-open-next=congress?page=all>] on 12 March 2012. Few readers should doubt that the recital of the Constitution in 2011 emerged from the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010. Goodlatte credits Virginia Attorney General Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II with the idea. Cuccinelli was one of the first to file suit against the law, arguing its unconstitutionality.

<sup>84</sup> *The Wall Street Journal*, “House Reads Constitution, Gets Civics Lesson,” 6 January 2011, [<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2011/01/06/house-read-constitutiongets-civics-lesson>] accessed on 14 March 2012; Jennifer Steinhaur, “Constitution Has Its Day (More or Less) in House,” *New York Times*, 6 January 2011 [<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/07/us/politics/07constitution.html>], Accessed 14 March 2012.

<sup>85</sup> Jennifer Steinhaur, “House Reading of Constitution Is Not Without Issues,” *The New York Times: The Caucus, The Politics and Government Blog of the Times*, [<http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/06/house-reading-of-the-constitution—is-not-without-issues/?pagemode=all>], on 14 March 2011.

“all be on the same page” and “reading in good faith” for the day.<sup>86</sup> The exchange teemed with defensive posturing, with the Speaker pro tempore rebuffing Inslee’s questions, noting flatly, “This is not a debate.”<sup>87</sup> Indeed, it was a peculiar commemoration. Once Inslee was recognized, however, the implications of staging *this* Constitution came into clearer focus. Inslee honed the political subtext of the occasion, stating, “I take it that since we have not had discussion about which language to read or not, that this is not intended to create any statement of congressional intent about the language but, rather, to do our best to have a moment of comity to read the language as best as we can ascertain it. Is that correct?”<sup>88</sup> Goodlatte’s response, neither denying nor affirming, was as concise as it was noncommittal: “I think the gentleman has stated that very well.”

Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL) took the point more seriously. From Jackson’s point, “given the struggle of African Americans, given the struggle of women, given the struggles of others to create a more perfect document, while not perfect, a more perfect document, to hear that those elements of the Constitution that have been redacted by amendment are no less serious, no less part of our ongoing struggle to improve the outcry and to make the country better, and our sense in our struggle and whom we are at the Congress of the United States at this point in American history and our desire to continue to improve the Constitution, may of us don’t want that to be lost upon the reading of our sacred document.” In Jackson’s argument, the redactions were “of

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<sup>86</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, “Reading of the Constitution—(House of Representatives-January 06, 2011),” Accessed through [<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi/bin-query/C?r112:/temp/~r112Xi8yu1>] on 14 March 2012.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*



consequence to whom we are.”<sup>89</sup> If the House of Representatives are participants of the same textual community, ought not the community jointly recognize the nature of the text and the nature of the reading?

Jackson’s observations are as equally true of the House of Representatives as a community of memory, as it was true of the Constitution as text *of* history. As Robert Bellah et al. note, a community of memory, such as a political institution requires an evolution in the substance and breadth of its relation to the past that unites its members. Such a community is not built on a shared meaning of the present alone, but “will remember stories not only of suffering received but of suffering inflicted—dangerous memories,” those which “call the community to alter ancient evils.”<sup>90</sup> By excising selectively from the Constitution’s language, Goodlatte’s preferred edit relegated key provisions of the document that might be central to cultivating a community of memory in the expansive House of Representatives membership. This observation goes without noting the other obvious devaluation of the edit: the intrinsic framework of the text itself. In this atypical recital, listeners and participants alike were in the strange situation to encounter the text promising to begin a political conversation through the ages while only hearing, in select portions, a response without a call. For example, the Twenty-First Amendment (repealing prohibition) was read aloud with *no reference* to the Eighteenth Amendment that would necessitate the aforementioned change. This text invited readers and listeners into a world of the present without a past. Gone is any

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1996), 153.

extension of the Constitution as the start of a political exchange. Listeners were presented instead with a new form of reading the text beyond questions of original intent, historical arguments about the document, the precision of its language, or textual arguments.<sup>91</sup> This Constitution resides firmly in the present, absent any contextual assistance from either outside or inside the document to gauge its significance or potency.

The lack of historical attention to the Constitution contributes to the second flaw of this moment of ceremonial repetition: the lack of a compelling enthymematic association for the text's extensional reconstitution. As White's instructive reading of the text indicates, the voice of the Constitution is one that introduces the people's voice, then moves to provide its reader with a tour of different realms of power within the new political world. The House of Representatives seems to be the ideal body from which to perform a networking of the Constitution. Different voices representing diverse communities and districts could be proposed to speak for the people, emphasizing the position of the House as the only governing body in the U.S. to be elected "by the people directly" from its inception.<sup>92</sup> This balance, however, eventually becomes untenable as the text moves from different branches of government.

One suggested inference of space and bodies enacting this recital offers little corresponding memory from which to accentuate. Lacking precedent or a national

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<sup>91</sup> Philip Bobbitt provides concise definitions of these modes of Constitutional argument. Historical arguments "marshals the intent of the draftsmen of the Constitution and the people who adopted the Constitution," while textual arguments are drawn "from the consideration of the present sense of the words of the provision." See Bobbitt, *Constitutional Fate: Theory of the Constitution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 7.

<sup>92</sup> George Galloway, *The History of the House of Representatives, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), 14.

relationship to the Constitution by date or place, the reading by the House of Representatives seems to represent a larger communal vision of Constitutional principle rather than a memory sought out from the text. Can the conversation started by the Constitution be continued in the present moment? The range of personalities and interests in the House of Representatives combined with the networking of the text provide such possibility. As Goodlatte clarified prior to the recitation, two representatives—Lamar Smith (R-TX) and John Lewis (D-GA)—presented excerpts notably to their experience: As chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Rep. Smith read a portion of the text pertaining to that branch of government, while Rep. Lewis recited the Thirteenth Amendment on the basis of his history advocating civil rights. Aside from these rare moments, the striking presence of multiple voices and personas enacting the text was a resource with little visible application.

In a political moment designed to remind viewers and audiences that the Constitution was *alive* in the House of Representatives, the display and embodiment of the text lacked enthymematic potency. A failure to cultivate a community of memory by acknowledging both the shared national past from establishment to reform—as well as the silencing of the text’s own historical evolution—leave the performance with a stale air of exact *present-ness*, unable or unwilling to move out of the institution’s exact moment. This component is especially harmful given the emphasis on reform and alteration emphasized prior to the recital and in the 2010 campaign of prominent Tea Party candidates. Perhaps it was political happenstance, then, that in the performance of the Constitution—complete with interruptions by Goodlatte offering to “yield time” to

each individual speaker—that Articles IV and V were inadvertently skipped altogether.<sup>93</sup> This omission accidentally quieted the text’s affirmation that states are guaranteed a republican form of government, and that, when they see fit, Congress may propose Amendments to add to the Constitution. What was missing from the design and original performance of the Constitution was a sense of what is possible in the present from what is historical in memory. For a politically charged commemoration originating from an ideological commitment to alter current laws and practices of government, the 2011 reading excises the most fundamental memory of the Constitution to complement such a situation: the ability of law to change. By recognizing these elements within the poly-vocal performance may have cultivated a greater respect for the institution’s shared past and its possibilities for a collective future. As it happened, however, neither textual life nor institutional identity was effectively commemorated or expanded. Viewers were witnesses to a failed act of remembrance, a rhetorical stillbirth.

*Enacting Proof and Suspending Time: “I Have a Dream,” 2005-Present*

Two weeks after the House of Representatives recited the Constitution, students from Watkins Elementary School in Washington, D.C. gathered at the Lincoln Memorial to pay tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. on the occasion of his birthday. One-by-one, children positioned on the precise step of the Lincoln Memorial where King once spoke, approached a microphone and delivered a rendition of the revered “I Have a Dream” speech. Like the House of Representatives, members of the NFL and the military, and

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<sup>93</sup> Rep. Goodlatte returned to the House floor following the official recitation to *officially* perform the skipped Amendments. See Josiah Ryan, “Parts of the Constitution Inadvertently Skipped in ‘Historic Reading’ on Floor,” *The Hill*, 6 January 2011, [<http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/house/136475-entire-section-of-the-constitution-inadvertently-skipped-in-this-mornings-historic-reading>].

the half dozen voices enacting Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the students' performed the speech through a network sensibility. The question of how the memory of this canonized text is made public has elided scholarly attention, even though the text has remained *the* dominant framework by which official and local communities have commemorated King since his assassination.

For better or worse, the "I Have a Dream" speech has been extended as a dominant memory of King. Like the marriage of holiday and text through the recital, the distance between man and text in American public memory is very narrow. The Watkins reading adds something new to the equation, however. Like the reading of the Constitution by the members of the House of Representatives profiled above, the primary symbolic cues interacting with this text are material. No formal oration or elaborate display accompanies the reading of the speech except the monument scenery and the collection of youthful bodies reciting the speech verbatim. Compared to the repetition in the House, however, contemporary readings of "I Have a Dream" are more effective in cultivating a memory of the speech through performance. Herein the ritual of reading turns the process of *prosopopoeia* and *ekphrasis* around: the act of reading brings the memory of the speech before the eyes. As I argue in the analysis below, the Watkins students succeed within the network style in ways the House of Representatives and others have failed. Lastly, this reading exemplifies the possibilities of networking the text and extending a public memory of speech through the relationship of text, space, and presence.

This interaction between old words and material bodies invites two important conclusions. First, I argue that the Watkins reading of the text demonstrates the effective potential of ceremonial repetition as a material expression of collected bodies. Indeed, more than any previous example cited in this study, this performance utilizes the network style as an integral component to enacting the memory of the speech. Second, in positioning the reading of the text within the symbolic space of the Lincoln Memorial, the performance invites an inference of suspended time, an attribute with equally positive and negative implications as constructive commemoration, and the broader remembrance of King. Finally, by considering the pedagogical usefulness of this performance, I suggest ways in which this practice might be utilized in broader applications in the future. Prior to analyzing the performance itself, however, it is important to consider the historical trend in remembering Martin Luther King Jr. and the canonized “I Have a Dream” speech.

Preceding Barack Obama’s speech as the first African American to accept a major-party nomination in U.S. history, Michael Powell of the *New York Times* illustrated the important overlap between the millennial era and the memory of Civil Rights. Obama’s rise in American politics carried added significance, Powell wrote, because some supporters “figured this dream for dead so many decades ago.”<sup>94</sup> Powell was referring to the many individuals who witnessed both King’s famous speech in 1963 address as well as Obama’s acceptance speech forty-five years later. The language remembering the man, the moment, and the speech is telling. King’s text is so ingrained

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<sup>94</sup> Michael Powell, *The New York Times*, “45 Years Later, Witnesses to Dr. King’s Dream See a New Hope,” 28 August 2008, A1, Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

in the American language of racial equality that a single word—"dream"—epitomizes a distance comprising decades of struggle and uneven progress. In his careful analysis of the text, J. Robert Cox suggested that King's dream phrase "articulated a temporal movement of long-suffering and the redemption of human struggle," essentially resolving the distance between promises of American freedom and the inadequate position of African Americans.<sup>95</sup> "Past and future are identified," Cox elaborated, in King's "image of 'sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners' who 'will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.' The dream is fulfilled in the lives of those who have inherited the legacy of slavery but who chose to struggle as brothers and sisters."<sup>96</sup> Though King's address was primarily an appeal against moderate gradualism,<sup>97</sup> the dream vision animated the national imagination and became *the* enduring reference to fulfilling American Civil Rights following King's death in 1968.

Multiple sources have contributed to anchoring public memory of King in this single oration. Coretta Scott King, who organized the King Center in Atlanta in her husband's memory, maintained an annual "State of the Dream" speech throughout the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>98</sup> Various birthday celebrations embrace the rich metaphor, and, as Harry A. Reed has noted, citizens have been reminded "to 'Fulfill the Dream,' 'Continue

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<sup>95</sup> J. Robert Cox, "The Fulfillment of Time: King's 'I Have a Dream' Speech (August 28, 1963)," in *Texts in Context: Critical Dialogues on Significant Episodes in American Political Rhetoric*, eds, Michael C. Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1989), 189-190.

<sup>96</sup> Cox, "The Fulfillment of Time," 200.

<sup>97</sup> Cox, "The Fulfillment of Time, 194; Also see: Robert Hariman, "Time and the Reconstitution of Gradualism in King's Address: A Response to Cox," also in *Texts in Context*, 204.

<sup>98</sup> Gary Daynes, *Making Villains, Making Heroes: Joseph R. McCarthy, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Politics of American Memory* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997), 136 and 142.

the Dream,’ ‘Make the Dream a Reality,’ ‘Reclaim the Dream, ad infinitum.’”<sup>99</sup> By the time a federal holiday was voted into law, the King Center was producing and distributing “a kit containing instructions on proper remembrance of King,” contents of which included “postcards of King, photos of the King family, a cassette recording of King’s ‘dream’ speech, and suggestions for appropriate Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish services.”<sup>100</sup> The center also encouraged (and discouraged) particular activities. Among those actions most smiled upon in memorializing King were “participating in a peaceful march,” “singing ‘We Shall Overcome,’” as well commemorations large and small, such as “naming buildings after Dr. King, ringing bells, studying King’s life at church, using commercial advertising to teach about King, and signing a ‘living the dream’ card” in personal observance.<sup>101</sup>

To critics of this isolated view of King, such a narrow remembrance has encouraged a “vapid” and “sanitized” effect on the memory of a truly radical persona.<sup>102</sup> After all, King’s voice not only favored peaceful integration, but also took on a range of issues concerning social justice—including American poverty and hard questions on capitalism—as well as his forceful critique of American foreign policy and the war in Vietnam.<sup>103</sup> To remember King through his “I Have a Dream” speech is, from multiple critical perspectives, limiting. In Leigh Raiford and Renee C. Romano’s analysis,

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<sup>99</sup> Harry A. Reed, “Martin Luther King, Jr.: History and Memory, Reflections on Dreams and Silences,” *Journal of Negro History* 84 (Spring, 1999): 151.

<sup>100</sup> Daynes, *Making Villains, Making Heroes*, 64.

<sup>101</sup> Daynes, *Making Villains, Making Heroes*, 64.

<sup>102</sup> Edward Morgan, “The Good, the Bad, and the Forgotten: Media Culture and Public Memory of the Civil Rights Movement,” in *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory*, 144.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, Martin Luther King Jr., “Nobel Prize Address,” “Speech on the Vietnam War,” and “Speech at Mason Temple,” all in *American Speeches: Political Oratory From Abraham Lincoln to Bill Clinton*, ed. Ted Widmer (New York: Library of America, 2006), 619-623; 651-667; 681-692.



memory of King is often “sterilized” to focus on “his nonviolent, integrationist rhetoric, especially for the ‘I Have a Dream’ speech, with its hope that one day little white children and little black children would hold hands and be judged on the basis of their character rather than the color of their skin.”<sup>104</sup> The goal in 1963, by implication, has taken a synecdochic quality as distance between the memory of King and the memory of the speech dissipated: “[h]e was the dream.”<sup>105</sup> As these memories fuse closely together, moreover, remembering the speech becomes a commemorative measuring stick of United States equality. Or, as Edward P. Morgan describes it, revisiting the “I Have a Dream” speech profiles the extent to which the United States has advanced “in realizing King’s powerful oratorical challenge of 1963.”<sup>106</sup>

Since January 2005, organizers from the National Park Service and Watkins Elementary School in Washington, D.C. have participated in memorializing the King holiday through the words of the “I Have a Dream” speech. The history of this exercise began as a purely pedagogical undertaking. Through a contact between the school and the National Parks Service, faculty and students were invited to bring their instruction and performance of the text from the classroom into a public experience. The event has thrived since 2005.<sup>107</sup> Six weeks prior to the reading students study the historical context of the Civil Rights movement and listen attentively to King’s speech in order to best match his original mannerisms and syntax. According to Maryam Abdul-Tawwab,

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<sup>104</sup> Leigh Raiford and Renee C. Romano, “Introduction: The Struggle Over Memory,” in *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory*, edited by Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), xviii.

<sup>105</sup> Daynes, *Making Villains, Making Heroes*, 120.

<sup>106</sup> Edward P. Morgan, “The Good, the Bad, and the Forgotten,” 141.

<sup>107</sup> Abul-Tawwab, telephone interview with the author, 10 May 2012.

a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher and assistant organizer of the event, the Watkins reading of “I Have a Dream” folds together three goals: education of the past, oratorical excellence, and lived history.<sup>108</sup> Inhabiting the physical and discursive space of the “I Have a Dream” speech marks the culmination of a rich pedagogical experience. More than education alone, I postulate that the Watkins Elementary recital brings a demonstrative effect to the act of ceremonial repetition not witnessed in the previous examples of the network style.

The Watkins reading of “I Have a Dream” does not reconcile the persisting tension regarding the dominant tendency to remember King through his famous speech. It does, however, perform exemplary demonstrative rhetoric because of a confluence of physical and environmental cues within the ceremonial reading. Here is an instance wherein the enthymematic quality of the reading is not merely the pairing of text recited and formal public address, political illustration, or a community journal, but the interaction of space and bodies bringing the words into being. In the words of Carole Blair, this reading presents a compelling match between memory of the text and a material form of delivery. Two material components weigh heavily in the contemporary performance of King’s “I Have a Dream” speech: the iconic backdrop of the Lincoln Memorial and the fourth-grade students themselves. I now present interpretations on how each shapes the life of this reading.

Viewers and listeners of this event are presented with a detailed reproduction of King’s speech outside its calendric time, with King’s birthday substituting for August

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<sup>108</sup> Maryam Abdul-Tawwab, interview with the author, 10 May 2012; An overview on the project’s preparation can be found at the Watkins Elementary School website at [<http://www.capitolhillclusterschool.org/our-schools/watkins-elementary/new-at-watkins-elementary>].

28<sup>th</sup>. On the exact step of the Memorial where King delivered his speech, children enact his words, substituting their bodies and voices for his—performing a distinctive public display of *prosopopoeia*. A place is distinctive, Dickinson, Blair, and Ott have argued, when it functions as “a marker of collective identity,” and a signifier of deep relevance, “offering a unique access to the past.”<sup>109</sup> As Benjamin Hufbauer’s summary of the Lincoln Memorial, illustrated, the symbolic nature of this place has been a significant site of transition, “from a racist temple about the Union into a symbol of equality.”<sup>110</sup> If monuments, in the words of Kirk Savage, “make credible particular collectivities” and also silent “rival collectivities,” the inclusion of the Lincoln Memorial in the Watkins reading reifies the symbiotic relationship between King’s speech and the sacred space of the Lincoln Memorial, perennially re-inscribing the text onto the surface of the space.<sup>111</sup> Reading and remembering King’s speech on the steps of the Lincoln memorial rehearses a national memory of galvanizing political action, and extends the relationship between speech and space, investing the act of reading and the space of commemoration with the intentions of King. This exact attention to material detail carries important implications for the second component of this recital: the readers themselves. Fusing place and speech in celebrations of King’s address functions, finally, the same way Kenneth Burke

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<sup>109</sup> Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian Ott, “Introduction: Rhetoric/Memory/Place,” in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 26-27.

<sup>110</sup> Benjamin Hufbauer, *Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 17. Also see: Christopher Alexander Thomas, *The Lincoln Memorial and American Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 2002; Scott A. Sandage, “A Marble House Divided: The Lincoln Memorial, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Memory, 1939-1963,” *Journal of American History* 80 (June 1993): 135-167; Kirk Savage, “The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument,” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 127-149.

<sup>111</sup> Savage, “The Politics of Memory,” 143.

described the potential of a poem's "sensory imagery": "inviting the reader...to make himself over in the image of the imagery."<sup>112</sup> To recall the classical concepts introduced in chapter one, the Watkins reading of King's address performed a dual function of remembrance: as *prosopopoeia*, the students take on King's presence at the Lincoln Memorial. As *ekphrasis*, the students make visible and perform what King described in words: the dream realized.

The scene of children gathered to recite King's speech brings the performance of the text into the realm of bodily action. Bodies were once privileged vehicles of remembrance. As Paul Connerton has argued, a body, "reduced to the status of a sign, signifies by virtue of being a highly adaptable vehicle for the expression of mental categories."<sup>113</sup> Framed within the physical space of the Lincoln Memorial, the collected voices of Watkins Elementary students invite a dominant memory from the text embodied in the act of reading. Octaves fluctuate, volume ebbs and flows, and the faces speaking King's words constitute a blur of gender, race, and expression. The implied enactment of King's address would not be possible without networking the text through this multitude of voices. The multi-vocal distribution of the speech isn't designed to match images with individual words in a quick-cut edit placing sight with its intended syllable. Instead, this display of memory implies a performance through practice of what was originally pledged through words alone.

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<sup>112</sup> Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action, Third Edition* (Berkeley: University of Los Angeles, 1973), 281.

<sup>113</sup> Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 95.

This reading brings the common memory of King's call for racial harmony before the eyes: the performance shows listeners "little black boys and black girls" joining in remembrance with "little white boys and little white girls as sisters and brothers."<sup>114</sup> Such effect could not be achieved through a lone voice repeated the words. It is only through the networking of the text—outside the environment of telecommunications or videography—that King's words are displayed through the multitude of personalities and voices represented for the occasion. This matching of a collective body to a collective memory represents a full enactment of physical remembrance, or what Connerton describes as the effort to "stylistically re-enact an image of the past" that will "keep the past also in an entirely effective form in their continuing ability to perform certain skilled actions."<sup>115</sup>

The Watkins reading takes the enactment of the past described by Connerton one step further. Rather than re-enacting an image of the past (King speaking at the Lincoln Memorial), students are also, by virtue of their age and diverse demographics, displaying a more precise memory of the speech through enactment.<sup>116</sup> By virtue of their diverse collective status, students both *enact* and *re-enact* the speech as memory. As Gerard

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<sup>114</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream," in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by James Melvin Washington (New York: HarperCollins, 1986), 219.

<sup>115</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72.

<sup>116</sup> This is similar to what observers of Barbara Jordan's 1976 keynoted address to the Democratic National Convention call a moment of "enactment." Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson define this rhetorical phenomena a moment when "the speaker incarnates the argument, is the proof of the truth of what is said." Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism, Fourth Edition*, ed. Carl R. Burchardt (State College, Pennsylvania: STRATA Publishing, Inc., 2011), 444; Leland Griffin refers to the inception stages of social movements and the importance of "body" rhetoric in much the same way. See: Leland M. Griffin, "The Rhetorical Structure of the 'New Left' Movement: Part I," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 50 (1964): 127.

Hauser argues, the demonstrative capacity of language is made real when “seeing is believing”: this materialization of rhetoric occurs when rhetorical actions “marshal verbal and formal resources that induce the audience to undergo the fantasia of imagined seeing. The fantasia of seeing, in which the audience is brought into the emotional ambit of eyewitnesses, then carries the demonstrative force of self-evident, valid proving.”<sup>117</sup>

In a rare connection between the content of a text and the inferred meaning of its performance, the Watkins recitation of the speech draws focus to King’s hope of bi-racial reconciliation, or the common connotation of King’s speech as a realization of the “dream.” These bodies reading the text are both re-enacting King’s words and also proving a dream brought into sight.

Though enactment brings focus to the memory of the speech within the moment of commemoration, this reading leaves a key dimension of the speech uncertain, raising questions still unanswered. First, close attention to detail of physical place shifts perception of time, both within the moment of remembrance as well as the text itself. In other words, King’s words, read without adulteration, are conveyed with a dual sense of purpose: one that mimics King’s appeal to a reluctant administration and an undecided public, while at the same time displaying the culmination of King’s hopes for a more equal, integrated future of American race relations in the present.

What remains unclear, however, is whether our memory of King’s speech assigns the listening public to keep enduring the hardships of civil rights, or if redemption has been achieved. Is the dream a work-in-progress, or has it been achieved? As one

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<sup>117</sup> Gerard A. Hauser, “Demonstrative Displays of Dissident Rhetoric: The Case of Prisoner 885/63,” in *Rhetorics of Display*, ed, Lawrence Prelli (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 234-235.

student participant responded when asked whether King's dream has been finalized, "No, not yet. It's come close, but not yet."<sup>118</sup> Listening to the "I Have a Dream" speech invites a similar suspension of perceived time akin to what Cox described in his close reading of the original speech as the "eschatological vision": "time is both what has been promised but is 'not yet.'"<sup>119</sup>

The suspension of time, while encouraging as thoughtful epideictic remembrance, carries potentially negative implications. This interaction between author and audience (or readers) is managed on a recognizable plane of interpretation.<sup>120</sup> As several critics of the dominant memory of American civil rights have noted, however, the vision of King shaped only by the March on Washington (which hardly ever mentions appeals for employment, a key reason for the March), minimizes the complexity of King, his critiques of American power, and his challenges to the moral and social status quo into a single message. Remembrance anchored in the "I Have a Dream" speech has resulted, Reed argues, in a skewing of "the growth and complexity of King's thinking and mask[ed] disturbing aspects of American race relations."<sup>121</sup> Indeed, whereas the Senate has failed to present a compelling vision of Washington's

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<sup>118</sup> "Students from Watkins Elementary School Pay Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.," *FOXDC News*, 13 January 2011, [<http://www.myfoxdc.com/story/17976651/students-from-watkins-elementary-school-pay-tribute-to-martin-luther-king-jr>].

<sup>119</sup> J. Robert Cox, "The Fulfillment of Time," 201.

<sup>120</sup> The celebration invites the inference that the dream is closer to being realized. One could imagine, however, a hypothetical recital of the same speech on the House floor prior to a debate on affirmative action legislation, wherein the likely sentiment struck resides in King's reference to judging people "not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." This memory of the speech was of greater relevance through such debates in the 1980s and 1990s. See: David Zarefsky, "George Bush and the Transformation of Civil Rights Discourse, 1965-1990," in *Civil Rights Rhetoric and the American Presidency*, eds. James Arnt Aune and Enrique D. Rigsby (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 231-267, especially 244-245.

<sup>121</sup> Harry A. Reed, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: History and Memory, Reflections on Dreams and Silences," 151.

Farewell Address from memory to recollection, the Watkins reading of King's address is susceptible to a similar fate: instead of keeping a recollection of the text silent from the display of memory, the organizers are vulnerable to maintaining a singular, unwavering recollection of the text in perpetual public view, regardless of the changing needs of the present.<sup>122</sup>

One could easily imagine alterations to the current commemoration of King to stave off limiting the memory of the text to a singular vision. As mentioned earlier, part of Watkins' mission in the display is to cultivate an appreciation for history and oratory through preparatory exercises that precede re-enactment of the speech. In this regard, the elementary program is aptly positioned to carry out the potential of mimetic pedagogy and liberal arts education.<sup>123</sup> If fourth-grade students can commemorate King via the "I Have a Dream" speech, similar opportunities to incorporate the enactment of others text central to American Civil Rights remain a productive pathway between formal remembrance and civic education. Within the realm of extending the life of public address by conveying the virtue of a text, the Watkins reading of King's words achieves greater resonance of memory with less effort than its contemporary practitioners within media environments. When matched to a discernable memory, networking the text can be a productive stylistic choice that cultivates the extensional character of public address. Where this community takes their remembrance now that it has been achieved is a facet of ceremonial repetition that remains to be seen.

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<sup>122</sup> When asked if she expected the new tradition of reciting King's address to continue indefinitely, Maryam Abdul-Tawwab verified that student involvement in the activity would ideally outlast the current faculty at Watkins Elementary.

<sup>123</sup> Robert Terrill, "Mimesis, Duality, and Rhetorical Education" *Rhetorical Society Quarterly* 41 (2011), 303.



## CONCLUSION

The network style of ceremonial repetition has introduced a diverse range of opportunities and constraints for publics imbuing the life of a text with fresh commemorative energy. As the case studies included in this chapter have proven, the usefulness and applicability of splintering the text into a diffuse, multi-vocal iteration is apparent both within emerging media environments and without. Within the sphere of video production and the marriage of word and image, the network sensibility produces an impressive level of possible meanings for a text repeated. Compared with the isolated speakers in examples introduced in previous chapters, the network treatment delivered unto the Gettysburg Address and Declaration of Independence allows for producers of such rhetoric to match associative images with the text on the basis of a sentence or single word. For *FOX Sports*, the producer of the networked Declaration of Independence, the new style forged a possibility to recast the text as affirmation of America's greatness, as an endorsement of the war on terror, and, in its final incarnation, a range of public and private experiences ranging from military preparedness, professional football, the arts, and business. As I argued above, the network style eventually created an untenable environment for the Declaration: pushed to the point of being something for everything, the memory of the text repeated implied something less, not more, certain. Virtue is presented as an oddly self-evident practice, evident in everything we do.

The enormous possibilities offered within a media environment can be fatal to the life of reading. As the reading of the Constitution in the House of Representatives

and the “I Have a Dream” speech at the Lincoln Memorial illustrate, moving the text outside a media environment and into a historical space is no guarantee for success, either. The incongruity lingering from the House reading of the Constitution is less derived from a sense of rhetorical space and more a result of mismatched intentions with the form of the text. One can lend the organizers of the repetition credit that, as elected officials, they were collectively participating in bringing life to a document and enacting the people’s voice. This relationship between citizen and representative, people and text is an admirable civic gesture of a political community pledging its adherence to a governing framework. However, as I argued above, this reading of the text was more about prospect than retrospect. The memory implied in the reading by the House of Representatives in 2011 denies the very quality of the text that motivated the recitation in the first place. For ideologues interested in proposing changes to a current design of laws, forgetting the virtue of advancement made for not only transparent political posturing, but also a rhetorical opportunity of comparison and memory unfulfilled.

The emerging tradition of reciting King’s “I Have a Dream” speech to commemorate the civil rights leader’s birthday illustrates the constructive application of the network style beyond the realm of cyberspace. This performance contributes to our canvas of ceremonial repetition in two important ways. First, it exemplifies the power of demonstrative repetition wherein the dominant memory of the speech is implied and enacted in reading itself. The nearly one hundred children of different races and genders move the promise (or accomplishment) of King’s dream into the visible, and constitute a memory in practice brought before the eyes of the audience—all without altering or

editing the text of King's address. Second, and more closely related to the subject of this chapter, the Watkins reading illustrates the effective application of a network style in enacting the memory of the speech. King's hope of a future with racial harmony is evident in the performance, and also reinforced in the multitude of voices converging within his speech. Whereas networking the text creates confusion and hodgepodge inferences in the 2011 *FOX Sports* production of the Declaration of Independence, splitting the delivery of the text among multiple voices reinforces and clarifies the implied public memory of "I Have a Dream" carried out in performance.

The drawbacks of the network style are varied to each example covered in this chapter, but reducible to the broader question of persistence over time. For texts encased in a media environment, the moment of ceremonial repetition remains, as Manuel Castells notes, an everlastingly continuum. Digitized repetition removes the text from physical space as well as any discernable moment in which repetition became necessary (if one even knows why). Thus, repetition risks becoming an airless affair without roots in space or time, conceivably playing on a repeated loop to viewers without knowledge of the occasion, the relation of the text to a community of listeners, or the significance of choices that change the words we hear again. Similarly, organizers of the Watkins reading must decide whether or not repetition outside a media environment will result in a dynamic and changing vision of the past, or if the "I Have a Dream" speech will remain in the public imagination as an unaltered image throughout independent needs or urgencies.

In closing, our examination of the network style leaves us with a familiar constraint by which to understand ceremonial repetition: the tension between what Burke called using a symbol to achieve “exposure without collapse, discipline without exclusion.”<sup>124</sup> When ceremonial repetition is filtered through the network sensibility, organizers and public communities turn to a multitude of voices and associations to bring a text to life. The life of reading, which should bring a text into a present moment and invite listeners to consider an ethical position with regard to their circumstance, remains vulnerable to the separation of a text from its discernable context and the potential barrage of associative symbolism attainable when text and image are orchestrated on a word-by-word basis. In other words, networking the text creates a potential constraint in locating the virtue by which listeners may understand the present moment. The exception to this practice, as noted above, is to incorporate the multitude of voices within the network style to become an active component in the ethic of reading. In achieving such balance, the Watkins reading of King’s speech has exposed an image of remembrance and ethic of remembrance without collapsing the text in symbolic disarray. In the final chapter of this study, I synthesize the observations made in the preceding case studies, and outline the tentative conclusions and remaining questions related to the time, place, and meaning of ceremonial repetition.

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<sup>124</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Counterstatement*, 182.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

*I had dreamed of speaking with the dead, and even now I do not abandon this dream. But the mistake was to imagine that I would hear a single voice, the voice of the other. If I wanted to hear one, I had to hear the many voices of the dead. And if I wanted to hear the voice of the other, I had to hear my own voice. The speech of the dead, like my own speech, is not private property.*

—Stephen Greenblatt.<sup>1</sup>

### ENCOUNTERING THE SECOND LIFE OF PUBLIC ADDRESS

Texts entomb ideas. Ernest Wrage justified analysis of speech texts by defining for their status as indicators of social thought. “From the study of speeches,” Wrage stated, “may be gained additional knowledge about the growth of ideas, their currency and vitality, their modification under the impress of social requirements, and their eclipse by other ideas with different values.”<sup>2</sup> Public address scholars are quick to highlight the importance of language as a vehicle of civic debate, and have contributed much to our understanding of ideas in process. As James Jasinski has noted, however, this scholarship often reflects a lop-sided emphasis on the text as an intrinsic entity, paying less attention to how episodes of public discourse evolve with public use, or “what happens *to* ideas *in* practice.”<sup>3</sup> If texts entomb ideas in historical context, audiences are excavators of verbal sites, hoping to discover something new or uncover something already known through a fresh encounter.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest Wrage, “Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History,” in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, ed. Carl Burgchardt (State College, PA: STRATA, 2010), 31.

<sup>3</sup> James Jasinski, “A Constitutive Framework for Rhetorical Historiography: Toward an Understanding of the Discursive (Re)constitution of ‘Constitution’ in *The Federalist Papers*, in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, edited by Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 73, *emphasis* in original.

Ceremonial repetition brings Wraga's vision of texts as the vessels of ideas full circle. By examining the rhetorical strategies of framing, form, and display, critics account for the application of old ideas in new settings and the extensional constitution of public address as public memory. Performing a text in a new environment ushers an epideictic experience, entailed in what W. James Booth has called bearing "witness," or asking oneself "to remember, to be a living memory, to guard the past, to ask others to do likewise, and to illuminate the trances of the past and their meaning."<sup>4</sup> The methods for illuminating texts as memory are as varied as the communities who find answers in the words of others. In this closing essay, I attempt to weave together the dominant threads of my argument outlined in preceding chapters. My overarching goal is to summarize the dimensions of ceremonial repetition evident in previous chapters, provide a larger reflection on the implications of repetition for our understanding of the text in its epideictic setting, and then reflect on conditions through which repetition might best extend the virtues expected in commemorative practice. As this discussion will illustrate, acts of reading, remembering, and repeating texts are individual steps to a larger rhetorical process: translation.

#### EXAMINING DIFFERENT FORMS OF THE TEXT

As I noted in the first chapter, a significant challenge to doing rhetorical criticism of ceremonial repetition is the relative lack of contemporary studies on the recital as a rhetorical strategy and a substantial history of communities channeling texts as purposeful vehicles of commemoration. In classical theories of education, exercises in

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<sup>4</sup> W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 73.

declamation, *prosopopoieia*, and *ekphrasis* were designed to groom a speaker's arsenal of invention, persona, and methods of vivid description. When directed to individual cognitive and rhetorical development, such practices strengthen a students' ability to engage the imagination of audience. When transferred to epideictic occasions of collective reflection, such practices contribute to the constitutive extension of past ideas in the public imagination.

To seriously consider what James Boyd White refers to as the "life of reading" a text requires a recalibration on our conventional presumptions about the limits of the text. The precise quality of a text is a source of lively debate in rhetorical studies, with two distinctive philosophies that respectively position the text as either an artistic design of dispositional wholeness, or as "fragments of culture that, when collected by the critic, comprise the object of rhetorical criticism."<sup>5</sup> As a cultural practice of communication, ceremonial repetition engages each of these perspectives. Texts are often read to purposefully maintain the artistic and linguistic craft of the author's design, while simultaneously incorporating accompanying forms of expression that cull a reading experience that is selective or directed to particular points of relevancy within a cultural

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<sup>5</sup> Leff's project, close-textual analysis, generally refers to the careful intrinsic evaluation of a speech text as an art form. In one notable excerpt from a foundational essay, Leff noted, "A well constructed oration contains a high degree of artistic integrity and density, and its proper understanding requires careful interpretive work." See Michael Leff, "Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G. P. Mohrmann," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 381. Michael Calvin McGee's project, vastly different from Leff's thesis, speculated that the conventional treatment of rhetorical "texts" were really collections of contextual "fragments." In one intriguing example, McGee speculated the possibility that "'texts' have disappeared altogether, leaving us with nothing but *discursive fragments of context*." See Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (1990): 287, *emphasis in original*. Robert Hariman summarizes the tension between what he calls "neoclassical" and "poststructural" critics as the formative debate in rhetorical criticism. See Robert Hariman, "Afterword: Relocating the Art of Public Address," in *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth Century America*, edited by Thomas Benson (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 165-179.

context. For the critic of ceremonial repetition, this dual embrace and mixture of messages means redirecting the critical question of analysis. Instead of reading messages repeated as isolated texts that remain consistent through time, analysis is focused to other rhetorical messages emerging from the epideictic context that accentuate, narrow, or dispense with particular associations in the text's new life. Repetition, in other words, is a potentially productive component to a text's meaning, not a rote exercise of constancy and stability. This orientation of the text carries two implications for research. First, our conception of the text is altered to account for the weaving of messages in an epideictic context, and not limited to only the iconic discourse worthy of a community's attention. Second, and related to the first point, the life of reading can emerge from several different messages sources within such commemorative contexts.

Repetition reflects a community's relationship to the text and the expansive memorialization of the text. Again, White's thesis of constitutive rhetoric remains a crucial framework from which to read moments of ceremonial repetition. Any text, White has noted, is "always a reconstitution of the culture" and is "necessarily *about* the culture, whether it idealizes it, ironically repudiates it, or elaborates its coherences. The text is not a closed system but an artifact made by one mind and offered to another; it recreates the materials of the world for use in the world."<sup>6</sup> Analyzing acts of repetition within a broader associative ceremonial context means accounting for how past discourse is memorialized and shaped by the "poetics of culture," or what Stephen

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<sup>6</sup> James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 280.



Greenblatt has called the “collective production of a text’s meaning.”<sup>7</sup> Like Jasinski’s model of extensional constitutive rhetoric, Greenblatt argued that the participatory role of a public in constructing a text’s meaning was found in the “social energy” around the text: the “verbal, aural, and visual traces [that] produce, shape, and organize collective physical and mental experiences.”<sup>8</sup> How are texts imbued with the social energy of collective remembrance? Separate case studies included in this analysis suggest that critics turn to formal oratory, the implied fusion of text and image, the implications of reading in conjunction with writing, and the potentials and pitfalls of a text’s environment (both mediated and physical space). Though more methods of remembering a text exist, each chapter of this study has contributed not only to a clearer understanding of a text as an iconic point of reference, but as a means of negotiating a communal identity.

Chapter three identified what may be the most traditional and enduring form of remembering the text. Frederick Douglass’s keynote speeches at August First celebrations in the late nineteenth century illustrate how accompanying speech in proximity to repetition invite listeners to understand old words in a new way. This mode of analysis closely mirrors the work of James Jasinski and Jennifer Merceica on the extensional character of the 1798 Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions. Their scholarship profiled “the way constitutive invitations become realized, and constitutive legacies established.”<sup>9</sup> John Rodden has called this sort of analysis “a *rhetoric of reception*,”

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> James Jasinski and Jennifer Merceica, “Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the ‘Principles of ‘98’” in Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (eds), *The*

meaning that the act of receiving a text is also a way of understanding how it is used:

“Receivers,” Rodden elaborated, “are also givers, lenders, borrowers, searchers—giving thanks, bestowing largesse, deriving glory, seeking authority.”<sup>10</sup>

Arguably the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation is the artifact of public discourse with the greatest need of a rhetoric of reception to establish its importance. As David Brion Davis has commented, the text alone was neither stirring nor exemplary: “The context and even the content of Lincoln’s words did not really matter. They would soon be forgotten. What mattered was the symbolic emancipation moment.”<sup>11</sup> Separated from this moment, the Emancipation Proclamation was inherited into August First gatherings across multiple locations and recitations decades after Lincoln’s death. Analysis of three speeches by Frederick Douglass reveals the Emancipation Proclamation was remembered as a discursive event-in-process. Divorced from its traditional January 1<sup>st</sup> calendar date, the document took on a roaming form, folded into a general holiday to commemorate human freedom evident in the successes and failures of the time.

As social energy around the text repeated, Douglass’s discourse ranged from moments of tense scrutiny, contested agency, and, in his most effective August First address in 1885, evidence of the audience’s agency in prompting political change. In the midst of a bleak social and political era for African Americans in post-Reconstruction

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*Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 333.

<sup>10</sup> John Rodden, *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of ‘St. George’ Orwell* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 70-71.

<sup>11</sup> David Brion Davis, “The Emancipation Moment,” in *Lincoln the War President*, ed, Gabor Boritt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 88.

America, Douglass recast the Emancipation Proclamation as a single, monumental achievement brought about through the means of political involvement and civic engagement, tailoring a remembrance of the text unlike either his previous speeches or the dominant trend of remembering the text as Lincoln's accomplishment. This appeal to memory invited audience members to keep a close relationship with the text as an ongoing process, won by protest and maintained by present-day activism.

Frederick Douglass and August First ceremonies represent a rich context of reimagining the Emancipation Proclamation. Future studies should consider the tumultuous reputation of this text carried out in various performances. For example, in 1913—the fiftieth anniversary of the decree's signing—W. E. B. Du Bois and Jane Addams organized an extraordinary rally in Chicago wherein a performance of the text took center stage. “Are we walking in the path which Abraham Lincoln blazed?” Du Bois asked, continuing, “Are we determined that this nation shall not be an oligarchy, half slave and half free, but a democracy based on the franchise of all men—and all women—regardless of their wealth, or their race, or the color of their grandfathers?”<sup>12</sup> Even more insight may be gleaned by following habits of repetition into the modern age. Martin Luther King Jr.'s early oratorical career, for example, included speeches at Emancipation Day gatherings. At one such setting, King defined the time as a Janus-faced occasion: “We stand today between two worlds: the dying old and the emerging

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<sup>12</sup> Du Bois quoted in “Return to Ideas of Lincoln Urged: Speaker at Celebration of Emancipation Calls Martyr Great Democrat,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 February 1913, pg. 5. Accessed through ProQuest Historical News Papers.

new.”<sup>13</sup> Du Bois’s emphatic emphasis and King’s relative silence both present strategies for embracing or managing the memory of the Emancipation Proclamation within their respective contexts. Though public address is clearly a rich vehicle for public memory, future critics should also consider the longitudinal attitude toward the text, including moments of communal silence or deflection.

Chapter four explored the rhetorical possibilities of iconology and repetition, and presented an argument for reading the remembrance of a text as both heard and seen. The political and ideological commitments to commemorating the Farewell Address in 1862 were exceptionally rare. Though reverence for Washington’s testament reflected high public commitment, and the exceptional public participation and social energy around the text was no doubt influenced by the perception of crisis: national separation was part of the ceremonial experience, and the intention of Founders like Washington were clearly up for grabs. Prompted by popular sentiment and filtered through a widespread political ideology, celebrations of George Washington’s birthday in 1862 illustrate the impressive potential of ceremonial repetition within a moment of political crisis. In response to a filiopietistic competition for Washington’s legacy, the widespread recitations of the Farewell Address mark a unique example of nearly uniform commemoration across contexts within this study. Even more compelling, however, was the juxtaposition of image and text as a basis for remembrance. Lincoln’s insistence of keeping confiscated Confederate flags at the reading of the Farewell

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., “Facing the Challenge of a New Age,” Address Delivered at NAACP Emancipation Day Rally,” in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., vol.4: Symbol of the Movement, January 1957-December 1958*, eds. Clayborne Carson, Susan Carson, Adrienne Clay, and Virginia Shadron (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 73-89.

Address coupled with *Harper's Weekly's* choice of making the sight of flags the vicarious window into commemoration of the text amounted to a rare moment of verbal and visual symmetry. Bucking the trend to display flags through precise detail and aesthetic clarity, the "Rebel Flags" illustration offered a vision of the moment and the text wherein the dominant public memory of the Farewell Address mirrored the display of dueling icons of nationality, creating a visual embodiment of textual repetition.

The implications of this conclusion are important to understanding the visual realm of ceremonial repetition. The fusions of illustrated journalism and ceremonial repetition, I argued, created a unique moment of rhetorical *ekphrasis*—translating “the visible into words which are somehow communicated as a visual experience”—for the occasion.<sup>14</sup> “Rebel Flags” reminds us that the extensional character of public discourse is charged and renewed in verbal as well as visual display. Instead of maintaining a traditional sense of aesthetic clarity and precision, “Rebel Flags” appropriates a style of depiction that mirrors the dominant memory of the Farewell Address while depicting the aftermath of the text’s performance. “Rebel Flags” reminds us that the life of reading can also include a the potential of reverse *ekphrasis* to constitute a communal vision, translating speech verbalized to the memory of speech brought before the eyes.

On first sight, the U.S. Senate’s longstanding ritual of reciting the Farewell Address to mark George Washington’s Birthday appears to derail any clear understanding declamation rhetoric. The act is nearly an isolated performance, an ill-fated attempt to align the political place of the deliberative chamber in Congress with the

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<sup>14</sup> Webb, *Ekphrasis*, 20.

discursive space of the Farewell Address brought into oral form. By stripping the recitation of the Farewell Address down to the bare act of verbalizing the text while simultaneously nurturing a robust palimpsest of reflections on the meaning of the words, the Senate highlights (and reverses) the traditional relationship between memory and recollection outlined by Aristotle, highlighting an essential framework implied in analyzing repetition as public memory.

As countless contributors to public memory studies remind us, our perceptions of the past must take textual form. Repetition, moreover, is a rhetorical event akin to a spatial design. James Young, whose work on Holocaust memorials has illustrated the central and fluid meaning of material substance, has summarized the interactive components of space and memory, arguing that “in the absence of shared beliefs or common interest, art in public spaces may force an otherwise fragmented populace to frame diverse values and ideals in common spaces,” prompting a material “illusion of common memory.”<sup>15</sup> Like an empty space filled with a deliberate structure or design, repetition interrupts an otherwise constant flow of time. Or, as Paul Ricoeur has suggested, the creative dimension of repetition resides in its “opening up of the past again to the future,” a sort of “ontological recasting of the gesture of historiography, seized in its most fundamental intentionality.”<sup>16</sup>

The distinction within the Senate’s reading of Washington is the separation of memory and recollection, the former being an image of the past and the latter being an

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<sup>15</sup> James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* [trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer] (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 380.

active, deliberate search for such an image. Through the one hundred plus years of practice, the Farewell Address has become a strange discursive space wherein Senators reside, and, in past experiences, used to share common space and time for remembrance. Using Aristotle's distinction between memory and recollection, the current tradition of repetition in the Senate positions the reading of the text—unadorned and unchanging—as the locating of a memory, while, by contrast, the recollection of the speech—reorganizing, renegotiating, and reimagining those words—occurs beneath the metaphorical surface in pages of signatures and scrawling recording readings past. The individual and communal directions of expression have switched: the memory, or image of the text, is the outward display and performance of the reader, while the search, or altered reception of the text, is moved inward. The Senate remembers where one expects it to recollect, and recollects where one expects it to remember. This strange encounter of ceremonial repetition is not without its intellectual insights, however. The philosophical implications of this relationship indicate a greater emphasis on individual sustenance from the message rather than a communal, public, or collective sense of identity. As critics continue to consider the value of studying different forms of declamation, our attention should be focused on the separation (or fusion) of texts behaving as memories and audiences taking on the work of recollection. The Senate's palimpsest is but one example of a community's habit of depositing recollections of the text; we may well discover many more should we know where to look.

Technological innovation has led to a new face of ceremonial repetition defined by the mixture of multiple voices, bodies, and images coalescing around the act of

repetition. In the past decade alone, various episodes in declamation have altered the landscape of how texts are received and displayed in public remembrance. No change has been more easily identifiable and essential this current phase of textual iteration than the proliferation of the network sensibility. As I argued in chapter six, the network style is discernable when the act of reading is divorced from the conventional expectations of a single voice dedicated to reproducing a text from beginning to end. In what Manuel Castells calls the “space of flows,” or a “structural logic” that is “spaceless,” it is possible to remember a text through multiple voices that fragment and branch the words of discourse in multiple directions, often without a dedicated sense of the text’s original disposition.<sup>17</sup> Even more, the act of reading endures beyond its occasion. The hyper-cut editing style that enables a collective performance of the text also removed the act of reading from a firmly established time, meaning the discursive space of reciting a text is an amorphous condition both beyond immediate experience and simultaneously accessible to all.

This altered landscape means the enthymematic potential of reading is heightened, as the interactions between sight and sound, and the fusion between words, images, and personas is accelerated. If the Senate’s practice was a literal separation of memory and recollection, the various modes of repeating a text in an age of the network sensibility have fastened the two together in material embodiment. Respective productions of the Gettysburg Address by *No Casino Gettysburg* and the Declaration of Independence by *FOX Sports* both illustrate this fast-paced fusion of image and word,

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<sup>17</sup> Manuel Castells, *The First of the Network Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Chichester, West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 443.



often with an implicit conclusion derived from the confluence of image and text. Texts are constantly uprooted and moved across various themes and associations, implying both contemporary relevance and an answer to a pressing issue in the present.

Even more surprising than the emergence of the network sensibility in online and video environments is the proliferation of the style from the realm of media technology to material space. The 2011 reading of the Constitution in the House of Representatives, and the newly emerging ritual of reciting Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech for the civil rights leader's birthday both recall the networked form of repetition applied in physical spaces of political significance. This new wave of ceremonial display, or bringing the text before the eyes of viewers, is built upon a more sensitive set of implicit premises. As I argued in the previous chapter, the network style may be best utilized for performances that incorporate a multitude of voices as a dimension the intended remembrance.

As the habitude of reading words of another through the network sensibility continues to spread, critics should consider the constitutive implications of ceremonial repetition on such a broad scale. Specifically, the act of reading as ceremonial remembrance begs the question of the exact source of such memory. Is ceremonial repetition more positively evaluated when it accurately reflects the content of the speech? How is public knowledge shaped if not through sight and repetition? Is it possible that a strange reading of a text, such as *FOX Sports'* empty production of the Declaration of Independence, could constitute public attitudes toward the text, and thereby cultivate a new memory of the 1776 document shaped through widespread

viewership? Such questions of meaning and the constancy of embodying the text raise important questions on effect, or how ceremonial displays of a text influence public knowledge. If not for the education of facts in a public sense, however, ceremonial repetition is an opportunity to present members of a community with a sense of virtue somehow garnered from the act of reading. The result of this process is best understood as a translation of public language and an interpretation of virtue, topics I now turn to in greater elaboration.

#### REPETITION AS TRANSLATION: THE VIRTUE OF THE TEXT

The burden of case studies is locating the common kernel that binds each together. As I've mentioned earlier in this chapter, the universal question of ceremonial repetition concerns the nature of the text. Each individual case for analysis has sought to broaden our thinking about the stability and change inherent in repetition. In his aptly titled essay, "The Problem of the Text," literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin explained the transition a text undergoes from its original form to later iterations. A "reproduction of the text by the subject (a return to it, a repeated reading, a new execution quotation) is a new, unrepeatable event in the life of the text, a new link in the historical chain of speech communication."<sup>18</sup> This observation—that texts live multiple lives—has been an essential presumption of this study. The life of the text is matched in endurance only by the metaphorical spatial dimensions of the text. As Kenneth Burke noted, our repeated relations with language entails a natural "deepening and widening" of symbols through

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<sup>18</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin [trans. Vern W. McGee], *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 106.

“exposure without collapse, discipline without exclusion.”<sup>19</sup> What keeps the life of reading from moving too close to either extreme?

Burke’s observation echoes the important thesis by Hans-Georg Gadamer’s on interpretive horizons and the extensional character of a text. Gadamer’s claim of refers to how publics “account for “everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point,” depicting how “one’s range of vision is gradually expanded.”<sup>20</sup> The expansion of the text means two things: first, the essence discovered in a text is cultivated from “the interpreter’s own thought” that facilitates a “re-awakening of the text’s meaning.”<sup>21</sup> Gadamer further posited that the “interpreter’s own horizon” was essential to the text’s meaning, framing the act of interpretation as “a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one truly make ones own what the text says,” or the “fusion of horizons. ... not only mine or my author’s but common.”<sup>22</sup> A “fusion of horizons” implies, in other words, something is at work in a textual encounter beyond the separate existences of text and individual perception. The lingering question is deceptively simple: if each reading of a text is an individual event, how can critics evaluate an isolated iteration as superior to another? This question does not lend itself to a comprehensive answer, but an ideal beginning point allows us to return to the prospect of constitutive rhetoric and the ethical character derived from the construction of texts, or, in our present focus, the re-imagination of public discourse.

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Counterstatement* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1968), 182.

<sup>20</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer [Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall], *Truth and Method, Second, Revised Edition* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), 301.

<sup>21</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 390.

<sup>22</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 390.

The function of language is translation. Ideas and experiences—so radically complex and individualistic—must be simplified, distilled, and communicated to forge a sense of public understanding. From the foundational presumptions of the symbol and the referent, the signifier and the signified, and the basic necessity of a common verbal and visual grammar to decipher communication, human beings are translators of one another’s messages. “How would we ever come to associate an idea with a verbal sound pattern, if we did not first of all grasp this association in an act of speech?” Ferdinand de Saussure asked in his well-known *Course in General Linguistics*.<sup>23</sup> If texts entomb ideas and, in some non-physical form represent a discursive space or rupture in communal time, how do publics and outside auditors unlock a text and locate a new translation? What counts as a legitimate *reading* of public discourse past, if not an accurate depiction of the author’s original message?

Part of the answer resides in James Boyd White’s lucid observations on legal criticism. White follows the path laid before him from Gadamer and Burke by positioning translation the operative process in our understanding of legal precedent and decision-making. Specifically, White notes that the “process of giving life to old texts by places in new relations” is a foundation of legal criticism.<sup>24</sup> When examined closely, White’s overview on legal criticism is a generic cousin of ceremonial repetition: publics remembering through repetition accomplish in communal display what judicial arguments convey in a legal ruling. White clarifies that *translation* is a process of

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<sup>23</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure [trans. Tory Harris], *Course in General Linguistics*, edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1972), 19.

<sup>24</sup> James Boyd White, *Justice as Translation: An Essay in Cultural and Legal Criticism* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 91.

matching what is given to the community (the text) with what the community brings to situation (repetition):

putting two things together in such a way as to make a third, a new thing with a meaning of its own. The effect of the composition is not to merge the two elements, or to blur the distinction between them, but to sharpen the sense we have of each, and of the differences that play between them. Such a composition naturally dissolves in time, and must be remade afresh, in new forms.<sup>25</sup>

White's *topoi* for analyzing legal discourse is a constructive comparison to better clarify and scrutinize the discursive action (and interaction) unfolding in ceremonial repetition. Artifacts of public discourse, like legal precedents, exist in the world, but come to be realized more fully as meaning is revisited, revised, and, in our case, repeated. If communities know what a text said in the past, what can such ideas accomplish in the present?

As I've already suggested, analysis of ceremonial repetition is best framed as the repetition of a text as memory and the associative symbolism and intersecting messages that reveal a purposeful remembrance around the text. Arguably our sense of remembrance could be the "third" which White speaks of above—an outgrowth from the interaction of the text and a public's treatment of it. Future critics of ceremonial repetition should remember, however, that a text repeated is still designed to do something for the public involved. Epideictic occasions serve the functional task of visualizing and cultivating communal virtue. In Gerard Hauser's description, epideictic orators instruct the audience on civic morality by profiling "accounts of nobility worthy

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<sup>25</sup> White, *Justice as Translation*, 263.

of *mimesis*,” or “deeds unfathomable were they not publicly exhibited and validated.”<sup>26</sup>

This public vision of epideictic occasions—highlighting the civic virtue to be understood—accentuates the display of the text central to ceremonial repetition. Elaborated further, repeating the text of another could be a way of accentuating that which should be valued, guarded, and exalted in public practice, revealing a point on the continuum between the thinness of universal consensus in the text and a thickness of a communities that are defined by—and also help define—the act of reading.

In the midst of robust conversations on the extensional character of speech texts and the multiple lives of public address, we should finally remember that the dead really are deceased. Their words *were* intended for a different time. Repetition is a mode of translating words that are otherwise lost in time. This is not to discourage ceremonial repetition as an empty gesture. Instead, the radically situated character of public discourse reminds critics that when we say that dead authors live through declamation, we must remain cognizant that audiences are, in the simplest terms, still talking to themselves. The objective of ceremonial repetition is to locate the virtue within the text, or to invent an appropriate virtue through the act of reading. The implications of this conclusion are important to understanding how positions of subjectivity are defined and reified through ceremonial repetition. Indeed, when public virtue is positioned as the coveted “third” dimension White defines between a text and a reader, critics of ceremonial repetition begin to search for ways in which forms of repetition foster a vision of virtue relating to the ethics of a civic community. Rhetoric that subverts

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<sup>26</sup> Gerard Hauser, “Aristotle on Epideictic: The Formation of Public Morality,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29, number 1 (Winter 1999): 19.

attempts to pull public virtue from a text repeated might be placed on par with the notion of liberal consensus or *thinness*, contrary to a thick reading of a text, or the deliberate attempts by interpretive communities to forge a vision of public morality out of ceremonial repetition. From the wholeness of the text—read from beginning to end—communities are stitching together a display of morality, not precisely a “fragment,” but nonetheless a representative part culled from the larger whole. Repetition is the opportunity for remembrance; whence such discursive space is opened, the words of another blend with our own social energy, becoming, in Barry Schwartz’s apt analogy, a “verbal totem” for collective remembrance.<sup>27</sup>

Selecting virtues from which to bring a text before the eyes of a wider audience leaves receivers with an array of options. The first option is to select or accentuate a theme within the text that carries a resonant public understanding, or rich enthymematic potential. Historical episodes of existential crisis are opportune moments wherein repeating a text may be most beneficial, publicly understood, and rhetorically productive. One reason the 1862 reading(s) of Washington’s Farewell Address were effective was the widespread public understanding and agreement on the master theme of Washington’s testament: union. Despite reciting passages irrelevant to the moment (independence in foreign affairs, the benefits of public education), the experience of combining the Farewell Address with public recitations prompted the emergence of a common third entity, or a recommitment to political Unionism—not the union of Washington’s text, but the recollection cultivated from a Union-centric ideology.

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<sup>27</sup> Barry Schwartz, “Rereading the Gettysburg Address” *Qualitative Sociology* 19 (1996): 415.

Absent the Civil War and extensive debates about Washington's rightful place as a United States republican or Confederate rebel, communities and planners would be less certain in predicting the intended virtue of the text was publicly understood and interpreted from such repetition.

Public knowledge of the text also makes light work for the Watkins Elementary School reading of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. This reading and its judicious selection of a resonant theme within the text, displays a vision akin to King's words as living proof of its material embodiment. Though both the 1862 reading of the Farewell Address and the contemporary remembrance of King call upon virtues within the respective texts from identifiable public sentiments, the reading of King has the potential, as I noted in chapter six, to reify remembrance as continually the same. In other words, while the Farewell Address is remembered in the Senate with a myriad of virtues attributed to the text (unknown outside to listeners outside the Senate walls or those who don't visit the Senate's website), the Watkins Elementary reading of King may potentially constrict the message of the speech to a single theme or virtue. In his important volume *Matter and Memory*, Henri Bergson describes the transition memory takes from a recollection to physical habit through repetition. Bergson elaborates, noting

a learned recollection passes out of time in the measure that the lesson is better known; it becomes more and more impersonal, more and more foreign to our past life. Repetition, therefore, in no sense effects the conversion of the first into the last; its office is merely to utilize more and more the movements by which the first was continued, in order to organize them together, and, by setting up a mechanism, to create a bodily habit. ... Of the two memories, then, which we have just distinguished, the first appears to be memory par excellence. The second, that generally studied by psychologists, is *habit interpreted by memory* rather than memory itself.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Henri Bergson [trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer], *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 83-84, *emphasis* in original.



Bergson's distinction pertains to a diminished emphasis on an individual action through the cultivation of habit. Though his subject pertains to individual psychology, these observations can easily be applied to several examples cited within this study. "Habit memory," as Paul Ricoeur summarizes Bergson's claim, does not require an evocation of preceding lessons, but is instead so firmly engrained that it becomes a physical impulse; memory of a particular event, by contrast, is distinctive and representative of an individual time.<sup>29</sup> For the Senate, part of breaking a public perception of autonomous habit should include a more public attempt to remember the Farewell Address in conjunction with its act of repetition. For Watkins Elementary students and the National Parks Service a similar prescription is potentially necessary: to explain how King's speech allows listeners to better understand a memory of the speech as it exists today. Though repetition is not equitable with sameness, the strategies of commemorating communities should remain mindful of presenting an image of the text that can be interpreted as merely habitual.

The second option for locating virtues within ceremonial repetition is to simply invent an arrangement where one did not previously exist, or where one is not symmetrically attainable through a base interpretation of the text. This theme is particularly evident in more contemporary examples. *FOX Sports'* production of the Declaration of Independence, for instance, restricts the remembrance of the text to one supporting America's foreign wars, or any ill-defined characteristic of American life. It does this, moreover, while removing from the text that very element which might justify

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Ricoeur [trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellaur], *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 25.

the reason for the message and the original argument supporting independence—the list of abuses by King George III. A similar theme can be determined in the reading of the Constitution in the House of Representatives, which was contextually motivated from an originalist conservative ideology, and a belief that the Constitution’s application could be embodied without giving discursive space to moments of its own history; praising the text for the possibility of future legislative change while purposefully eradicating its own sense of change through the act of reading. The question for receivers inventing virtues through repetition need not be reduced to one of accuracy, *per se*. Frederick Douglass’s views on the Emancipation Proclamation were historically subjective and rhetorically flexible at most August First occasions. But the virtue of public participation and activism were not only resonant within the needs of the late nineteenth century, but helped to expand the collective history and social standing of African Americans and abolitionists throughout a bleak moment of political history. It was within the discursive space of Lincoln’s 1863 decree that Douglass forged a remembrance by which his audience could identify as common history and the model for emulation in the present moment.

Whether determined from existing public memory of the text, invented from a perceived situational need or some combination of the two, future critics of declamation rhetoric should consider a number of important questions regarding the transformation of meaning and effect. Namely, the resonance of display carries constitutive dimensions of self and communal identity. The endurance and effect of such ceremonial displays, however, has yet to be determined. One possible mode of accounting for the altering

remembrances of a text through declamation is the application of symbolic convergence theory. As Ernest Bormann has noted, a “rhetorical vision,” or group perception of the world is nurtured through the employment of “fantasy themes,” or “creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need.”<sup>30</sup> As fantasies are shared, communal identity is reinforced and expanded. The effect, in which case, is determinable through the sharing of a fantasy them, when members “have charged their emotional and memory banks with meanings and emotions that can be set off by a commonly agreed upon cryptic symbolic cue.”<sup>31</sup> Arguably, future critics of ceremonial repetition can study the rhetorical vision of past texts both within verbal repetition and remembrance, as well as illustrated and embodied artifacts of public display.

The distinct possibility remains, however, that rather than observing a form of recollection chaining out through symbolic convergence theory the life of a text is best lived (for both dead author and living audience alike) on a limited basis. Arguably, the more compelling the circumstance, such as a national or existential crisis, the more likely the presence of a speech repeated will resonate within a common cultural premise. Again, the existential crisis of 1862 is a terrific example: in the most unconventional of moments, reading Washington’s paragraph-long sentence and tangled written cadences made sense to a large contingent of the population who yearned to bear witness to Union in performance, memory, and display. The best potential impact of repetition, these

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<sup>30</sup> Ernest G. Bormann, *The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001 [1985]), 5; Jasinski and Mercieca also suggest Bormann’s framework could be a useful gauge for analyzing the extensional life of public address. See: “Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics,” 319.

<sup>31</sup> Bormann, *The Force of Fantasy*, 6.

chapters indicate, resides in a deep rather than long—or continuous—impression on the public imagination.

Further, moments of crisis allow for greater flexibility in wrestling a text's attachment to rhetorical genre. Here, too, future critics should consider the implications of how much the genre of a text—despite consistent dedication to content and form—is dependent on the occasion alone. Washington's Farewell Address was never as argumentatively charged than when it was recited in 1862. Redirecting the text from an epideictic to a deliberative style provides an even more compelling overturning of pre-existing meaning, attaching the concerns of the present within such words. The alternating function of genre is also an apparent element of the Watkins Elementary School recitation of the "I Have a Dream" speech. King's deliberative call to end segregation and cease both political extremism and apathy is the contemporary mode of understanding his birthday within the present context. What is gained and what is lost when a text repeated is vaulted into a new generic format? Do some directional movements enhance a constitutive charge while others diminish such impact? Questions of effect and the generic constraints remain rich fields of study for future students of ceremonial repetition.

## CONCLUSION

Language is inheritance. While public address is still our best way of understanding the introduction and evolution of public ideas, those ideas are also the heritage of communal relations. As I've tried to show in this study, conflict and resolutions of such debates can take several forms, particularly when the legacy of a text

is open for question. Though the exact meaning of ideas or discourse is always open to new interpretations and gets dispersed in a variety of discursive forms, ceremonial repetition remains one of the most rhetorically significant methods of renegotiating and reimagining the texture and shape of our linguistic heritage.

Organizers of ceremonial repetition would do well to recognize their power of remembrance, the responsibility to strategically do more than merely repeat the words of others, and to account for the communal implications of such choices. As this study has shown, a selection of text, channel, and occasion all greatly influence what new recollection will emerge from a text repeated. The reappearance of the text is an opportunity to invite public participation and alter perceptions of civic virtue and communal relations. Ceremonial repetition, above all, should tell us something about our present moment and, most importantly, ourselves. If communities are willing to take on the responsibility of the past and blend their voices with the words of others, such display has the potential to be educational, to encourage a renewal of common values, and—when placed against a recognizable public need—to be worth the wait.

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